

〈Article〉

A Systematic Narrative Review of School Leadership Studies in Japan from 1978 to 2018

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1. Introduction

The importance of school leadership emphasized by international researchers has been moving to national and local contexts (Hallinger, 2018). Considering Japan's high performance in the Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2016, 2019), scholars are dying for understanding school leadership in Japan (Yokota, 2019). However, scholars mention that the literature on school leadership has been dominated by studies from English-speaking, largely Western, Anglo-American societies (Hallinger, 2018; Hallinger & Chen, 2015; Murphy, 2019). In addition, although many review studies explore local school leadership, their sources are not from local but international journals written in English (Castillo & Hallinger, 2018; Hallinger & Chen, 2015; Hallinger & Hammad, 2019). Consequently, limited understanding remains in the field of school leadership outside of these contexts, such as Japan (Hallinger & Chen, 2015). Moreover, studies about school leadership in Japan is internationally deficient (Yokota, 2019) due to research conventions and language barriers seen in Asian countries (Walker & Qian, 2015). Therefore, there is a demand to grasp an overview of school leadership research in Japan.

Although previous review articles explore Japan as an East Asian country (Hallinger & Bryant, 2013; Hallinger & Chen, 2015; Ho, 2006), few sources from Japan were included. In addition, Japan would be unique among East Asian countries in terms of history, culture, economy, and educational systems. Recently, Yokota (2019) conducts a review to explore the role of principals as leadership styles in Japan by using national legislation and policy documents. He argues that Japan has adapted several leadership styles on the documents. However, little is known about how school leadership scholars writing theoretical and empirical studies see school leadership based on the accumulated knowledge and empirical data. Thus, the aim of this study is to provide an overview of how school leadership studies in Japan, which has not been explored in international journals. This study has a potential to illustrate patterns of school leadership trends in research and practice in Japan.

(1) Context of school leadership in Japan

In contrast to the situations in other countries such as the UK, US, and Australia, where school autonomy has been valued traditionally, leadership of principals in Japan's public schools has some institutional limitations. Japan features a centralized educational administration system represented by a hierarchy pyramid topped by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), with boards of

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education sitting in the middle, and schools constituting the bottom (Shindo, 2005). In 1956, a set of laws stipulating organization and management of local educational administration were enacted. The laws reinforced the chain of command from MEXT to boards of education and schools to establish a centralized control system. Because boards of education hold authority over personnel issues of principals and teachers, schools' authority in this context is very limited. Moreover, principals serve for only two to three years at a school and cannot fully understand the characteristics of teachers, hampering effective role sharing and improvement at schools (Usui, 2016). Regarding curriculums, too, the official Course of Study stipulates the contents and number of classes in a detailed manner with legal binding force (Ueda & Shuto, 2019). Therefore, public schools are required to prepare curriculums in accordance with the Course of Study.

Although the situation remains basically unchanged today, three major reforms were conducted with the purpose of establishing school autonomy. The first reform was triggered by the Central Council for Education's report (1998) titled "What the Local Educational Administration Should be in Future," which advocated the idea of establishing school autonomy. Responding to the report, school evaluation and school advisory councilor systems were institutionalized. However, despite its concept of establishing school autonomy, the reform did not include a revision of laws regarding power sharing between boards of education and schools. Accordingly, schools' authority over personnel issues remained small although there was some advance in their discretion over budgetary issues. Overall, the institutional reform to establish school autonomy remained insufficient (Ojima, 2003).

The second reform concerned promotion of school leader training. This started in 2004 when MEXT developed a model curriculum for school organization management training with the aim to enhance competence of school leaders to manage their schools autonomously (MEXT, 2004). Backed by MEXT's recognition of the necessity to enhance the leadership of principals and vice principals, school leader training, which included practical content such as case studies, spread widely throughout Japan. In 2009, the professional graduate school system for teacher education was launched at the initiative of MEXT – as a part of these programs, school leadership training courses started, mostly for working teachers.

The third reform was introduction of a community school system aiming at an expansion of school authority in the areas of personnel and budgetary issues. In 2004, the laws stipulating organization and management of local educational administration were modified to facilitate foundation of school management councils, allowing parents and community residents to send their representatives as committee members. According to MEXT (2018), however, the number of public schools that have introduced the community school system was only 5,432 or 14.7% in 2018. Moreover, concerning the point that boards of education still hold authority over personnel issues of principals, vice principals, and teachers, the nature of the community school system differs from that of the school-based management and self-managing schools (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998). Since these changes, Japan has not seen any major reforms in school leadership.

(2) School leadership research in Japan

After the 1956 laws stipulating organization and management of local educational administration were enacted, researchers became worried that democracy and decentralization of educational administration might recede. They insisted on the necessity of developing research on educational administration and management as independent areas of pedagogy and founded the Japanese Association for the Study of Educational Administration (JASEA) in 1958, which was followed by the Japan Educational Administration Society (JEAS) in 1967.

In particular, the JASEA showed strong interest in school organization and management, in addition to professional competence of principals, and formulated “Professional Standards for Principal: Desired Principal Image and Competences” in 2009 (e.g., Ushiwata, 2010; Motokane, 2014). The JASEA took the initiative in formulating the standards because there were no standards of this kind stipulated by a government institution or the National Association of Principals. They are basically a referential framework and have not been utilized officially.

It should be also noted that school leadership research in Japan has been performed mostly in the Japanese language and only published domestically, with little contribution to international journals (Sato, 2018).

2. Research questions

Although school leadership research in Japan can possibly provide abundant knowledge, there seems to be no literature overviewing research in this area. Given the expansion of educational policy borrowing, there is a demand of mapping the literature in terms of methods, themes, and local contexts (Murphy, 2019). In order to provide an overview of the previous studies in Japan and draw gaps in the literature and future research direction, the following research questions guides this study:

1. What is the composition of the school leadership literature in Japan in terms of method of studies?
2. What kind of themes have been discussed in the school leadership literature in Japan?

3. Method

As researchers suggest that local language sources are needed for understanding and broadening school leadership research in certain areas (Castillo & Hallinger, 2018; Walker & Qian, 2015), this study utilizes articles published in peer-review journals issued by Japanese academic associations.

First, the study identified two peer-reviewed journals in Japanese, which are *The Journal of the Japanese Association for the Study of Educational Administration* and *The Journal of the Japan Educational Administration Society*. These journals are the only two journals focusing on school management, leadership, administration and policy. The journals were published by the academic associations, “Nihon Kyouiku Keiei Gakkai (The Japanese Association for the Study of Educational Administration)” and “Nihon Kyouiku Gyousei Gakkai (The Japan Educational Administration Society)”. For both journals, we limited the time period to papers published between 1978 and 2018. The target articles were searched by using the database, “J-Stage”, provided by Japan Science and Technology Agency with search keywords related to school leadership. The keywords were determined in consideration of the Japanese context. The keywords included “ko-cho (校長) (principal)” and “ri-daa (リーダー) (leader)”, which were used as OR condition, could identify, for example, “vice-principal” and “school leadership”. The initial search found 106 articles. Second, both authors read the whole articles and narrowed the corpus based on the following inclusion criteria: (a) relevance to school leader or school leadership concerning elementary and secondary level education, and (b) empirical or conceptual nature (empirical, theoretical, historical, and review studies). In order to identify the most representative articles, we then excluded articles based on the exclusion criteria: (a) publications that did not elaborate theoretical or methodological constructs (i.e., insufficient explanation of theoretical background, lack of clear explanation of research methods), (b) publications that uses school leadership keywords as a minor word and focused on another topic, and (c) publications that only focus on methodology. As a result, the authors agreed that there

were 49 articles left for analysis.

To synthesize the accumulated knowledge in school leadership studies in Japan, the study followed the procedure of a systematic review and thematic analysis (Cherry *et al.*, 2017) in order to ensure scientific classification of “the relevant literature in a comprehensive, transparent and objective manner” (Byrne, 2016, p. 1). After reading the articles, both authors, who are well versed in school leadership studies and its history in Japan, inductively coded preliminary themes. Since the themes have broad meaning, articles can be coded as multiple themes. Then, the authors categorized core themes and sub-themes by mutual consent.

4. Results

(1) Nature of the articles seen according to research methods

We sought to classify the nature of the articles as empirical, non-empirical, and review articles. Among 49 articles, there were 27 non-empirical (55%), 19 empirical (39%), and 3 theoretical or review (6%) articles. Among the non-empirical articles, 17 articles were about educational policy. When study targets were assessed, 33 articles targeted cases in Japan and 16 articles described systems in overseas countries with an effort to find some insights there. Theoretical studies reviewed theories such as the sense-making theory by K.E. Weick (Usui, 2001) and the reflective practitioner theory (Kanagawa, 2005). No articles developing original theories were found.

Next, this study also examines the research methods adopted in empirical studies within the target articles. We categorized the articles as qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Among the empirical studies, there were 9 quantitative (47%), 6 qualitative (32%), and 4 mixed method (21%) studies. Although many quantitative studies conducted questionnaire surveys of principals and teachers (Tsuyuguchi, 2004a; 2004b; Yoshimura *et al.*, 2014), some utilized open data such as data on personnel changes (Motokane, 1993). Qualitative studies mainly employed ethnographic and interview methods (Suwa & Atsumi, 2006).

(2) An overview seen from predominant themes

Our review identified three core themes: school leader, leadership and management in school organizations, and school governance. Table I shows the number of articles according to the respective core themes and sub-themes. Since some articles were assigned to multiple themes, the number of each theme does not correspond to the total number of the targeted articles.

Table I. Distribution of articles by core themes and sub-themes

Core theme	n	Sub-theme	n	Articles
School leader	43	Role of school leaders	16	Yoshida, 1978; Yuki, 1980; Hamada, 1989, 2006; Shinohara, 1989; Yanagisawa, 1991a; Motokane, 1993; Mizumoto, 1996; Hamada, 1998; Hirai, 1998; Tsuyuguchi, 1998; Sato, 2004; Suwa & Atsumi, 2006; Tani, 2012; Hayashi, 2012; Ueda, 2016

Leadership and management in school organizations	42	Competence and behavior of school leaders	21	Ohno, 1998; Tsuyuguchi, 1998; Chichibu, 2000; Tsuyuguchi, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2004a, 2004b; Usui, 2001; Motokane, 2003; Kanagawa, 2005; Soyoda & Soyoda, 2007; Ushiwata, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013; Suematsu, 2013; Hiwatashi <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Yoshimura <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Sato, 2014; Ohtake, 2018
		School leader training	6	Yanagisawa, 1991b; Owaki, 2005; Ushiwata, 2011, 2013; Suematsu, 2013; Ohtake, 2018
		Organizational improvement and its effectiveness	17	Hamada, 1991, 1998, 2006; Motokane, 1993; Mizumoto, 1996; Chichibu, 2000; Tsuyuguchi, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2004a, 2004b; Kawakami, 2005; Sugawara, 2006; Shinohara, 2008; Fujioka, 2013; Yoshimura <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Teruya, 2016
		Multi-layer participation and school community cooperation	12	Hamada, 1998; Tsuyuguchi, 2001; Kawakami, 2005; Owaki, 2005; Suwa & Atsumi, 2006; Soyoda & Soyoda, 2007; Shinohara, 2008; Hayashi, 2012; Tani, 2012; Fujioka, 2013; Tsujimura, 2016
		Decision making	7	Shinohara, 1989; Yanagisawa, 1991a, 1991b; Maehara, 2003; Hamada, 2006; Sugawara, 2006; Fujioka, 2013
School governance	27	Organizational value and culture	5	Ohno, 1998; Tsuyuguchi, 2004a, 2004b; Ohno, 2010; Yoshimura <i>et al.</i> , 2014
		Educational policy	17	Yoshida, 1978; Yuki, 1980; Mizumoto, 1988; Hamada, 1989, 2006; Shinohara, 1989, 2008; Yanagisawa, 1991a, 1991b; Yamamura, 1996; Hirai, 1998; Sato, 2004; Owaki, 2005; Sato, 2014; Teruya, 2016; Tsujimura, 2016; Ueda, 2016
		School autonomy	10	Mizumoto, 1988; Hamada, 1989, 1991; Shinohara, 1989, 2008; Yanagisawa, 1991a; Yamamura, 1996; Maehara, 2003; Sugawara, 2006; Yoshimura <i>et al.</i> , 2014

(3) Core theme 1 School leader

Core theme 1 consists of three sub-themes: role of school leaders, competence and behavior of school leaders, and school leader training (Table I).

① Sub-theme 1 Role of school leaders

The articles discussing sub-theme 1, role of school leaders, contains two groups: legal and historical research. The first group discusses current roles and authority of principals from the legal and institutional viewpoints. Yoshida (1978) analyzes laws and systems relevant to principals' legal power in Japan and suggests that principals have authority to prepare curriculums in cooperation with teachers, while accountability in the curriculums lies solely with principals. Yuki (1980) and Yanagisawa (1991a), Hamada (1989), and Shinohara (1989) examine principal systems in overseas countries, namely, Germany, the US, and China, respectively. Hamada (1989) discusses that the US has come to find greater importance in the principal role to conduct educational activities by promoting goal sharing and cooperation within individual school organizations.

Shinohara (1989) reports the situations of principals in China under the principal accountability system established in 1985. Yanagisawa (1991a) describes the roles of German principals in coordinating diverse opinions among the schools' decision-making panels and ensuring that their decision-making abides by relevant laws.

The second group of historical research analyzes principals in the Meiji period (1868–1912) (Mizumoto, 1996; Hirai, 1998). Mizumoto (1996) introduces unique efforts and devices by a famous principal in around 1900 in the areas of teacher organization and school duty allocation. Hirai (1998) illuminates historical situations in which principals' role as an administrator was stressed after the establishment of the educational system in 1872 and their role as an educational leader developed in and after 1890.

Among the 16 articles categorized in this sub-theme, 10 were written no later than the 1990s, three in the 2000s, and the other three in the 2010s. This indicates that roles of school leaders were actively researched in the 1990s in Japan. Mizumoto (1996) and Hirai (1998), who performed historical research targeting Japanese cases, as well as Hamada (1989), who researched cases in the US, note that improvement of educational quality is an important role of principals.

② Sub-theme 2 Competence and behavior of school leaders

The articles classified into sub-theme 2, competence and behavior of school leaders, are categorized into four groups: research on principals' work behavior, competence of educational leaders, professional standards for principals, and theories on principal competence.

Among the first group, which focuses on principals' work behavior, Tsuyuguchi (1998) analyzes principals' work behavior through ethnographic research and shows that principals devote much of their time to scheduling, safety management, confirmation and implementation of curriculums and lessons, and voluntary participation in seminars. Likewise, Ohno (1998) analyzes principals' work behavior using the ethnographic method and shows that principals spend many hours on various problem-solving activities and 60% of their working hours are spent on communication.

The second group consists of research on competence of principals and local educational administration staff (Motokane, 2003; Tsujimura, 2016). Motokane (2003) reveals a discrepancy between local educational administration staff and principals based on a questionnaire survey; the results show that administration staff strongly expect principals to demonstrate administrative competence, whereas principals expect themselves to acquire not only administrative competence but also the competence to improve education. Tsujimura (2016) analyzes careers and tasks of educational administration staff and indicates that they are expected to be competent to coordinate political situations in addition to being educational leaders.

The third group consists of research on professional standards for principals. Since Japan does not have any official standards to stipulate principals' profession standards as many other countries do, Ushiwata (2011, 2012, 2013) examines the contents and significance of these standards formulated by the JASEA. Responding to this, some articles introduce examples of professional standards for principals in foreign countries for referential purposes, which include National Professional Qualification for Headship (Suematsu, 2013) in the UK and Australian Professional Standard for Principals, National Professional Standards for Teachers (Sato, 2014) in Australia, Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium 2015: Model Policy Standards for Educational Leaders, and Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (Ohtake, 2018) in US. However, the targets of reference are limited to the US, UK, and Australia, with no comparison between the standards in Japan and those countries.

Among the fourth group, research into principals' competence, Usui (2001) reviews literature by K.E. Weick and introduces theories in overseas countries. Taking into account the highly uncertain and ambiguous causal correlations found in school organizations, Usui emphasizes the importance of the principals' role to give meanings to their activities. Based on literature by Earley, P., Elliott, J., and Eraut, M., coupled with a report by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in the UK, Kanagawa (2005) discusses the importance of developing competence to learn continuously through principal training courses.

The earliest articles among the research on competence and behavior of school leaders are those by Ohno (1998) and Tsuyuguchi (1998). No articles on this sub-theme occur before 1998; however, 19 articles in this area of research have been written since 2000 up to recent years (ten in the 2000s and nine in the 2010s). This indicates the newness of the sub-theme and that the number of relevant research articles has surged in the past 20 years.

③ Sub-theme 3 School leader training

Regarding sub-theme 3, school leader training, Owaki (2005) describes the situation in Japan that school leader training is provided through in-service training and master's degree level education. Following the discussion, Owaki asserts that school leader training programs should be formulated on the foundation of case studies and practice-based studies, also pointing to the need for integration of theory and practice. Yanagisawa (1991b) analyzes principal training programs in Germany and shows that the programs consist of areas such as legal information, organizational climate, parent participation, personnel issues, and school finance. Suematsu (2013) reports about the NCSL training program in the UK, along with information that training programs are also provided by colleges and school other than NCSL. Ohtake (2018) reports on school leader training and the principal qualification system in the US, also noting that many principals have a master's degree but few have a doctor's degree.

Except for Yanagisawa (1991b), all of the few articles on school leader training have been published in and after 2005. Interest in research on school leader training rose in the mid-2000s, with one article published in the 2000s and four in the 2010s.

(4) Core theme 2 Leadership and management in school organizations

Core theme 2 consists of four sub-themes: organizational improvement and its effectiveness, multi-layer participation and school community cooperation, decision making, and organizational value and culture (Table I).

① Sub-theme 1 Organizational improvement and its effectiveness

Articles classified into the sub-theme 1, organizational improvement and its effectiveness, are categorized into three groups of research: principal leadership and its effectiveness, boards of education and superintendents, and school improvement.

Regarding principal leadership and its effectiveness, Tsuyuguchi (2000a) examines the literature by Hallinger (1992), Leithwood (1994), and Leithwood *et al.* (1996) for quantitative analysis of schools that are led by transformational leadership. Based on the results, Tsuyuguchi argues that transformational and transactional leadership realizes vision sharing and brings changes in teacher behavior, thus enhancing school performance. Tsuyuguchi (2000b) also conducted case studies of schools led by instructional leadership based on the literature by Hallinger (1992), Leithwood and Duke (1998), and Heck *et al.* (1990). The results indicate that instructional leadership in forms of goal sharing, lesson support, and promotion of training has an effect in

enhancing student learning outcomes.

Among research on boards of education and superintendents, Motokane (1993) elucidates patterns of personnel changes for high school principals; that is, boards of education hold authority over personnel issues of principals and principals move to more prestigious and traditional schools as they gain experience upon decisions by boards of education. Tsuyuguchi (2001), with reference to Murphy and Hallinger (1986), Peterson *et al.* (1987), and Wirt and Christovich (1989), concludes that it will be effective if a superintendent expresses their policies clearly to principals, coordinates the policies with them, and makes political coordination with the local council. Shinohara (2008) develops discussion based on Wong (2007), Elmore (2004), and Kirst and Edelstein (2006) and introduces a case of a school district in Boston, US, where the board of education provides coaching for teachers in collaboration with a non-profit organization Boston Plan for Excellence in order to improve schools. Fujioka (2013) examines the literature by Leithwood and Louis (2011) and Spillane (2006) and reports the case of a school district in New Haven, US, where the board of education conducts a school climate survey and effectively promotes the shared leadership of principals.

Among research on school improvement, Hamada (1991) elucidates through a questionnaire survey that teachers regard their busyness as an obstructing factor for school improvement while principals consider that school improvement is hampered by teachers' lack of competence and willingness, as well as a lack of educational supervisors in small-sized boards of education. Hamada (1998) analyzes the school-based management policy in Florida, US, with reference to Hallinger and Heck (1996). Hamada illuminates the situation in Florida in which the roles of principals have been changing from those of authoritative leaders to those of facilitators, and that teachers with leadership promote cooperation among teachers and, in turn, improve schools.

Among the 17 articles on organizational improvement and its effectiveness, as many as 10 were published in the 2000s. There are also four articles published in the 1990s and three in the 2010s, suggesting that the theme has been researched regardless of time. However, research in this area seems to have a decreasing trend, because the number of articles fell from ten in the 2000s to three in the 2010s. Of the 17 articles, 13 focus on cases in Japan and four focus on cases in the US (Hamada, 1998, 2006; Shinohara, 2008; Fujioka, 2013). Although no articles on the sub-theme of organizational improvement and its effectiveness focus on cases in overseas countries other than US, many of them refer to research in foreign countries in their earlier sections such as the research framework and discussion of previous studies.

② Sub-theme 2 Multi-layer participation and school community cooperation

Regarding sub-theme 2, multi-layer participation and school community cooperation, Kawakami (2005) focuses on the importance of social networks and elucidates through a survey of 24 schools the situation in which principals and vice presidents use networks such as the principals' association in order to exchange information and consult each other, utilizing the results for their school management. Suwa and Atsumi (2006) indicate, based on a case study focusing on an elementary school, that the principal's exchange with community residents vitalized the local community. Hayashi (2012) emphasizes the importance of building a vision of cooperation, in addition to collaboration, transmission of information, and self-assessment, for a school to promote cooperation with the community.

Regarding multi-layer participation and school community cooperation, no relevant articles appear until 1997, suggesting that research on the theme started to develop in the 2000s.

③ Sub-theme 3 Decision making

Regarding sub-theme 3, decision making, based on a case study of a high school, Sugasawa (2006) analyzes a process of decision making to achieve improvement in lessons and academic competence. According to Sugasawa, the principal ensured that the school policies penetrated among the teachers through their interviews for performance review. The principal then used the results of school assessment sent from the school management council (such as strong dissatisfaction among the students toward classes) to determine yet another policy to improve classes.

Among research targeting cases of overseas countries, Maehara (2003) conducted a questionnaire survey of secondary school principals in Germany. The results show strong awareness among principals of comprehensive schools about competition with other schools in the process to improve their schools, whereas principals of gymnasiums and general schools show low awareness of such competition. Based on this, Maehara points out that promotion of competition among schools as a means of improvement is difficult for gymnasiums and general schools. Hamada (2006) discusses a case in Florida, US, where a school-based management system is introduced and shared decision-making through the school advisory council is valued. Hamada also describes the situation in which the principal has come to assume a major role in promoting communication and building a shared vision among the council in their effort to formulate, implement, and access the school improvement plan.

Research on the theme of decision making was conducted both in the 1990s and the 2000s. However, no articles have been published since Fujioka (2013).

④ Sub-theme 4 Organizational value and culture

Regarding sub-theme 4, organizational value and culture, Tsuyuguchi (2004b) refers to Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) and quantitatively analyzes how principals' sense of value affects their leadership. The results show that what contributes to principal leadership is the fact that their sense of value coincides with that of teachers, regardless of the nature of the principals' sense of value, e.g., transformational. Yoshimura *et al.* (2014) conduct a quantitative analysis based on the idea of principals' facilitative leadership advocated by Bryk *et al.* (1999). The results show a positive effect on school performance when principals succeed in creating an environment that facilitates teachers to take action on their own initiative. Yoshimura *et al.* (2014) also note that the idea of facilitative leadership that values teachers' initiative partly corresponds with that of distributed leadership.

Research on organizational value and culture is mostly conducted with reference to US literature, although articles in this area remain few.

(5) Core Theme 3 School governance

Core theme 3, school governance, consists of two sub-themes: educational policy and school autonomy.

① Sub-theme 1 Educational policy

With regard to sub-theme 1, educational policy, Teruya (2016) researches a policy to enhance academic competence in Okinawa prefecture through improvement in lessons. Teruya points out that it is effective as an educational policy because boards of education founded an academic competence development office and actively visited schools to support it. Tsujimura (2016) shows that despite abundant experience in class improvement and student guidance, boards of education today are too busy to exert such experience, with too

many hours being demanded for dealing with political issues such as congress affairs. Tsujimura suggests that boards of education are required to formulate and implement educational policies based on full understanding of the concept of national policies, with consideration that the policies are acceptable for local schools.

Among research focusing on overseas cases, Yamamura (1996) introduces the situation that liberalization of school choice in the UK produced competition among schools. Focuses of other research on overseas educational policy includes legal roles of principals in West Germany (Yuki, 1980), a policy to expand school autonomy and selection of principals in the UK (Mizumoto, 1988), roles of principals and training in the US (Hamada, 1989), principal accountability system in China (Shinohara, 1989), roles of principals in Germany (Yanagisawa, 1991a), principal training in Germany (Yanagisawa, 1991b), school-based management in the US (Hamada, 2006), boards of education in the US (Shinohara, 2008), school leadership in Australia (Sato, 2014), and local educational administration in Korea (Ueda, 2016).

The area of educational policy research has experienced constant publication of articles through the years. Of the 17 articles on educational policy, 11 focus on overseas issues, whereas six focus on domestic issues. This indicates active research in the area of overseas educational policy; however, the target countries are only the US, UK, Germany, Australia, China, and Korea.

② Sub-theme 2 School autonomy

Among research on sub-theme 2, school autonomy, Mizumoto (1988) reports the situation in the UK, where the authority of school administration boards on principal selection was reinforced by the implementation of the Education Reform Bill in 1988. The article discusses the major trend of the time in the UK to transfer the authority to schools from the perspective of personnel issues of principals. Hamada (1989) discusses the necessity for principals in the US to change their roles and enhance competence amid the trend of school-based management. Maehara (2003) describes the situation in Germany, where marketization (school choice and competition) and school autonomy are keywords of educational reform, coupled with an exceptional case of the state of Hessen, where schools stay out of marketization and are without autonomy. Shinohara (2008) elucidates the process in which a school site council for school-based management in Boston, US, established governance and promotes school improvement based on distributed leadership.

Of the 10 articles focusing on school autonomy, seven research overseas issues and three deal with domestic issues. This reflects strong interest among researchers in increased school authority in overseas countries.

5. Discussion

(1) Research trend and background

The themes of research articles we reviewed were classified into three core themes: school leader, leadership and management in school organizations, and school governance. The following is a discussion of the trends and backgrounds of the respective research areas.

① Trend and background: Core theme 1 School leader

Among the three sub-themes of school leader research, sub-theme 1, role of school leaders, was actively discussed in the 1990s. In comparison, sub-theme 2, competence and behavior of school leaders, showed active publishing of articles in recent years; out of 21 articles we examined, 19 were published in and after 2000. Sub-

theme 3, school leader training, is also experiencing an increasing number of articles, suggesting high demand in recent years.

This indicates a shift in research interest from role of school leaders, which was a major theme in the 1990s, to competence, behavior, and training of school leaders, which became mainstream in and after 2000. The following three are identified as background factors. The first is the advocacy of “establishment of school autonomy” by the Central Council for Education (1998) report. It encouraged researchers to explore the reality and ideal of competence and behavior of school leaders. The second factor is the formulation of the model curriculum for school organization management training by MEXT (2004) and the launch of professional graduate school systems for teacher education to nurture school leaders. By 2016, every prefecture had at least one professional graduate school for teacher education. It is considered that these educational policies raised demand and interest in research on leader training. The third factor is the formulation of Professional Standards for Principal: Desired Principal Image and Competences in 2009 by the JASEA. During the preparation of the standard and after its announcement, interest in professional standards for principals rose and stimulated researchers to investigate competence and behavior of school leaders both in Japan and overseas.

② Trend and background: Core theme 2 Leadership and management in school organizations

In the studies of core theme 2, active quotation from overseas research and reference to overseas theories suggest that researchers have been actively trying to adopt overseas theories since the 2000s. Hallinger (1992) and Elmore (2004) are referred to in more than one article, indicating attention to them among Japanese researchers.

In core theme 2, the most articles (17) are in sub-theme 1, organizational improvement and its effectiveness, although this shows no chronological increase, with four, ten, and three in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, respectively. The other sub-themes, multi-layer participation and school community cooperation, decision making, and organizational value and culture, show little change in the number of articles by time period. Regarding the background of the increase in articles on organizational improvement and its effectiveness in the 2000s, two possible factors are pointed out. The first is, as in the case of core theme 1, the Central Council for Education’s advocacy of “establishment of school autonomy” in the 1998 report. It is considered that, following the report, school improvement led by individual schools attracted attention, thus encouraging research on school management and its effectiveness, along with research on roles and nature of school leadership in the 2000s. The second factor is the introduction of the community school system in 2004, which also drew attention to management and improvement of school organizations. These situations likely produced the need to introduce knowledge about organization management and leadership of schools from overseas research, thus facilitating references to overseas research articles and quotations from them. In other words, this suggests that the selection of research themes strongly reflects the educational policies of the time.

③ Trend and background: Core theme 3 School governance

Research on core theme 3, school governance, has been conducted constantly regardless of time period, indicating a universal research theme through the years. Overall, research in this area concentrates on discussion of school organizations and principal autonomy. It is also noted that targets of research into overseas cases are limited to developed countries such as the US, UK, Germany, and Australia, in addition to

neighboring countries such as China and Korea.

There are two background factors for the trend of research concentrating on overseas cases. Firstly, the theme of school autonomy drew interest in Japan because it is rare in the domestic circumstance (Sato, 2018). Research interest has concentrated on educational administration systems, such as local management of schools and school-based management, which – differing from the centralized Japanese system – transfer substantial authority to schools. Secondly, English-speaking countries such as the US, UK, and Australia draw attention because they allow easy access to research in English. Furthermore, the strong interest in US cases is likely a result of the historical background that the Fundamental Law of Education in Japan was established under US guidance after World War II, along with the US-style board of education system (MEXT, 2009). Accordingly, the two countries share a feature that they both have a board of education system.

As so far discussed, research on core theme 1, school leadership, and core theme 2, leadership and management in school organizations, reflect trends in national educational policies. However, research on core theme 3, school governance, is independent of trends in national policies and shows interest in foreign systems. Researchers in this area show strong interest in cases in the US due to the historical background of the Japanese educational system.

(2) Suggestion for school leadership research

School leadership research in Japan has developed with influences from national educational policies and overseas literature. These research activities have been conducted mainly in the Japanese language and led by the JASEA as well as the JEAS. Although the history of domestic development of research in this area has significance of its own, there are some issues to be noted such as the limitation in terms of internationality.

Firstly, researchers are required to be aware of influences of educational policies when selecting themes of school leadership research. After the Central Council for Education advocated “establishment of school autonomy” in their 1998 report, a series of educational political events with major influence followed, including the development of a model curriculum for school organization management training by MEXT and the launch of a professional graduate school system for teacher education to nurture school leaders in 2004, in addition to announcement of professional standards for principals by the JASEA in 2009. This boosted development of research in competence and behavior of school leaders and school leader training in core theme 1, school leadership.

Likewise, among research on core theme 2, leadership and management in school organizations, the changes in the number of articles on the major sub-theme, organizational improvement, and its effectiveness, is considered to reflect influences of educational policies. To be precise, the number of articles on organizational improvement and its effectiveness increased in the 2000s following the Central Council for Education’s report in 1998 to advocate “establishment of school autonomy” and the institutionalization of community schools in 2004, coupled with the influence of research results of overseas school leadership policies, only to decrease afterwards. Organizational improvement and its effectiveness is an important research theme under any kind of educational policy, therefore, would be better as a continuous research theme over time.

It is natural and has its own significance to choose a research theme relevant to the educational reform of the respective times. However, if researchers fail to have a panoramic view recognizing influences of educational policies on research themes, this will lead to an overconcentration of research activities on themes relevant to specific educational policies. Although the concentration of research activities does not only have negative effects, it may hamper researchers from choosing other important themes. It is possible, for example,

to set a theme that is not included in domestic educational policies but is a focus of international argument and to present the research results both inside and outside Japan. Researchers may choose from such themes as what kind of principal leadership improves students' academic competence (Moos *et al.*, 2011; Leithwood *et al.*, 2017) and how principals make decisions appropriate for school improvement based on evidence (Collins & Coleman, 2017; Greany & Brown, 2017). Although these themes are not explicitly indicated by current educational policies in Japan, they are central themes of international research activities. In order to actively participate in the discussion, Japanese researchers are required to keep up with the latest international trends and knowledge of school leadership research to understand and examine them carefully.

Secondly, our study results illuminate the limitation of discussing the global issue of school leadership in the Japanese language only. After the foundation of two academic societies, information on overseas policies and systems has been essential to consider school leadership in Japan, along with educational administration issues and research agenda. For this reason, research targeting overseas policies and systems has been very active regardless of times, especially in the area of school autonomy. Due to differences in language and research tradition, however, the targets of these research activities have been limited to the US, UK, Germany, Australia, China, and Korea. Reports on the school-based management in the US and the local management of schools in the UK, which differ from Japan's centralized system, provide useful information for researchers and policymakers. Meanwhile, there are some limitations from the perspective of international academic exchanges.

The first limitation included that most of these research activities remain mere introductions to overseas situations without disseminating domestic research or survey results. For example, themes such as what kind of characteristics are observed in principal leadership in Japan and how Japanese principals improve their schools under the centralized-authority system will provide an interesting perspective in a sociocultural context. It is necessary to disseminate knowledge of school leadership in Japan more actively into the international community.

The second limitation is the narrow targets of research to specific countries. In particular, research articles targeting the US or UK dominate. A wider range of countries that attract international attention for their systems and quality of education should be included in the future, by overcoming linguistic and institutional inconvenience.

The third limitation is insufficient information on international research base. Although concepts such as instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and distributed leadership have been introduced to Japan (Hamada, 1989; Shinohara, 2008; Tsuyuguchi, 2000a, 2000b), these academic results imported from overseas countries are composed using the Japanese language. The majority of researchers in Japan do not publish their research results in foreign languages. As a result, social science research including school leadership studies in Japan may follow the path of so-called "galapagosization," or an overly unique course of development isolated from the outside world (Yazawa, 2014). For this reason, in order to make school leadership research more fruitful internationally, researchers need to set research themes based on full understanding of international trends. However, this does not simply mean that Japanese researchers accept English as their research language. It also indicates that overseas researchers are expected to contribute to research in local languages for more fair and equal academic exchanges (Yazawa, 2014).

6. Conclusion

Our review facilitated understanding of school leadership research in Japan and presented suggestions for

future effort. Although the research results are suggestive enough, there are also some limitations. Firstly, the keywords for selecting target articles were limited to “leader” and “principal”. In order to comprehensively review school leadership research, the keywords relating to school leadership must be reexamined in future review studies. Secondly, whereas this review focused on two journals, many other research results are published through various publishers in forms of books and university journals due to the academic tradition of social science research in Japan. Future research should also target these publications. Thirdly, we limited the time period to papers published between 1978 and 2018. A review of trends for 2019 and beyond will be an issue for future studies. Fourthly, despite mutual confirmation between authors in extracting the themes, there still remains the possibility that contents of the target articles were overly generalized. Despite these limitations, this study successfully provides an overview of school leadership research in Japan in addition to important suggestions for future research.

The authorship of each section of this paper

The responsibilities of each section are as follows. 1.Introduction, 2.Research questions and 4.Results sections were written by Sato and Yada. 3.Methods section was written by Yada. 5.Discussion and 6.Conclusion sections were written by Sato. Yada was in charge of the basic work on compiling a database of relevant literature and identifying trends, which was finally confirmed by the two authors.

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1978年から2018年までの日本におけるスクール・リーダーシップ研究に関する システマティック・ナラティブ・レビュー

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日本は生徒のリテラシーに関する国際的な調査で高い評価を得ているにもかかわらず、日本におけるスクール・リーダーシップに関する研究は国際的に不足している。本研究の目的は、日本で研究されているスクール・リーダーシップに関する先行研究を概観し、研究の時系列的な傾向を明らかにすることにある。そこで、(1) 日本におけるスクール・リーダーシップの文献は、研究の方法から見てどのような構成をとっているのか、(2) 日本におけるスクール・リーダーシップの文献では、どのようなテーマが議論されてきたのか、という研究課題を設定した。

本研究は、システマティック・レビューとテーマ別分析の手順で行った。まず、データベース「J-Stage」を用いて、スクール・リーダーシップに関連するキーワードで、『日本教育経営学会紀要』『日本教育行政学会年報』という日本語の査読付き学術雑誌に掲載された膨大な論文を特定した。最初の検索では、100以上の論文が見つかった。次に、最も代表的な論文を特定するために、著者兩名が包括基準と除外基準を用いて全論文を読み込んだ。その結果、49本の論文を本研究の対象とすることに著者らは合意した。

本研究では、「スクールリーダー」「学校組織におけるリーダーシップとマネジメント」「学校ガバナンス」という3つのコアテーマを取り上げた。コアテーマはサブテーマで構成されている。調査結果は、各テーマの傾向等について論じている。本研究は、海外の研究者がアクセスしにくい日本語で書かれた論文を対象にすることで、日本におけるスクール・リーダーシップ研究を理解するための概観を提示する。本研究は、日本におけるスクール・リーダーシップ研究の中核となるテーマを特定したものである。