

An Analysis of the Global Education Policy Market

– Its Rise and Impact

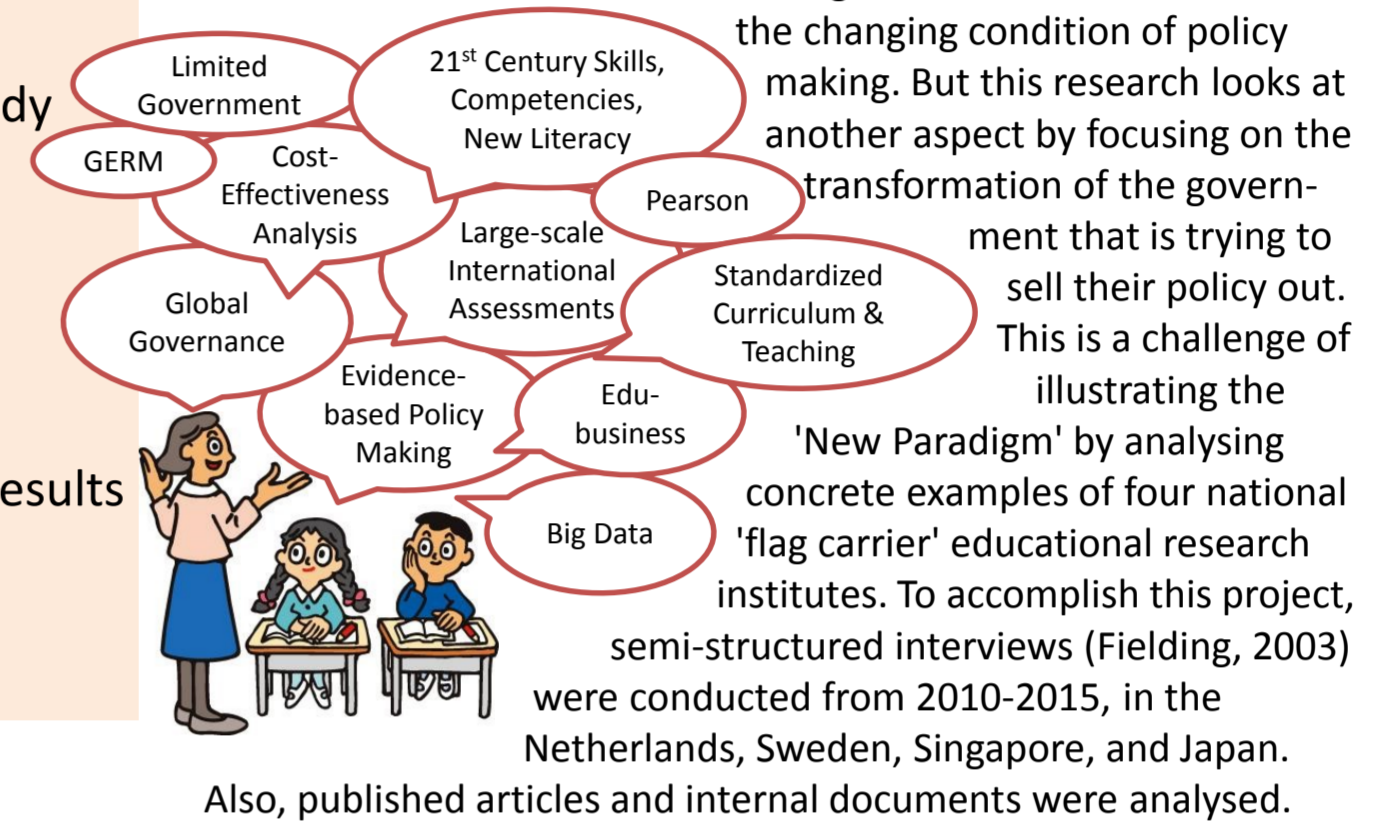
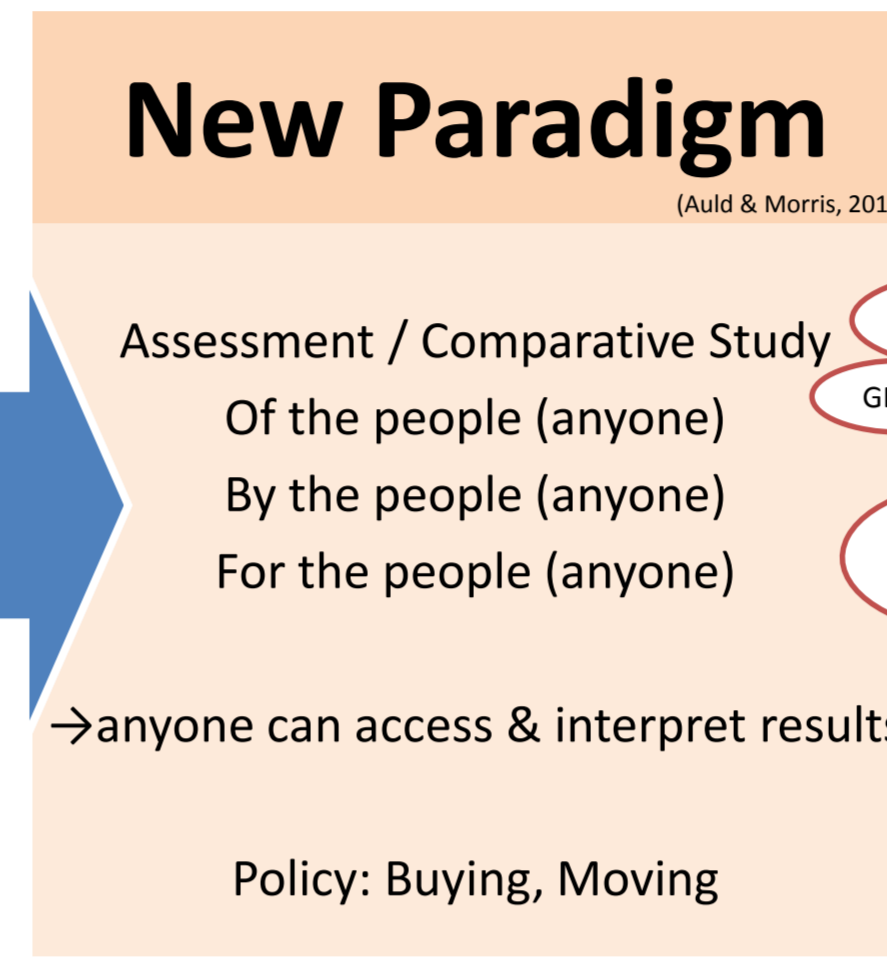
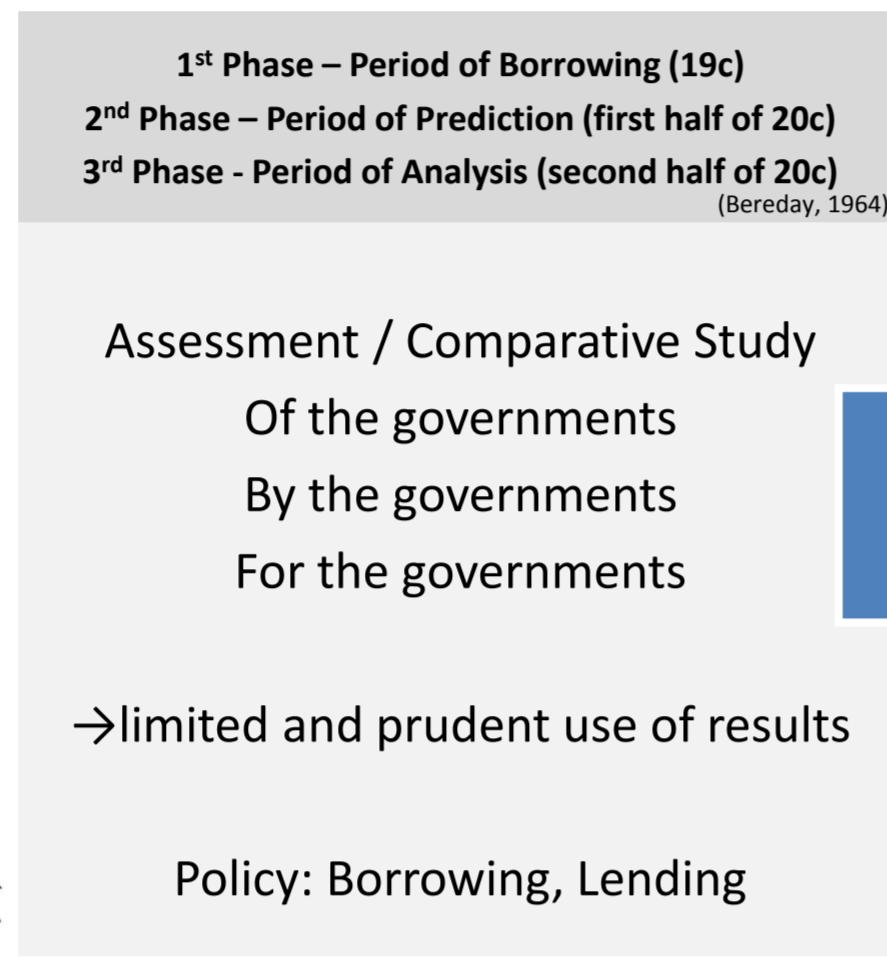
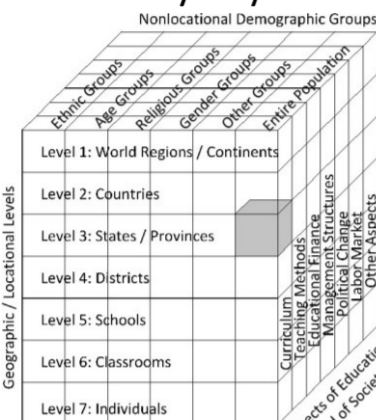
Kampe HAYASHI

Education policy has become a good for sale and purchase, creating the Global Education Policy Market. This new phenomenon requires a renewal of traditional research methodology. This research is intended to create an arena for discussion on this new and complex phenomenon, in which all of the European countries are deeply involved.

1. Challenging the 'New Paradigm'

Theoretical and Methodological background

Large-scale international assessments have risen with the stream of evidence-based policy making. Further, the growing demands on accountability support the persuasiveness of cost-effectiveness analysis. These new ideas on education policy are changing the fundamental situation of comparative studies. The third phase of comparative studies, which Bereday (1964) defined as the 'period of analysis', is considered no longer valid. Assessments or comparative studies used to be planned, operated, and used by state governments. But today, PISA is planned by an international organization, operated by a multinational for-profit company, and used by anyone from policy entrepreneurs to parents. The field of comparative studies is experiencing a shift to the 'New Paradigm' (Auld & Morris, 2014). The new idea of dealing with big data makes the policy options comparable with different levels, groups, and aspects (cf. Fig. 1.). The data mined from PISA are now employed for individual school improvement.



2. Rise of the Global Education Policy Market

Major Findings

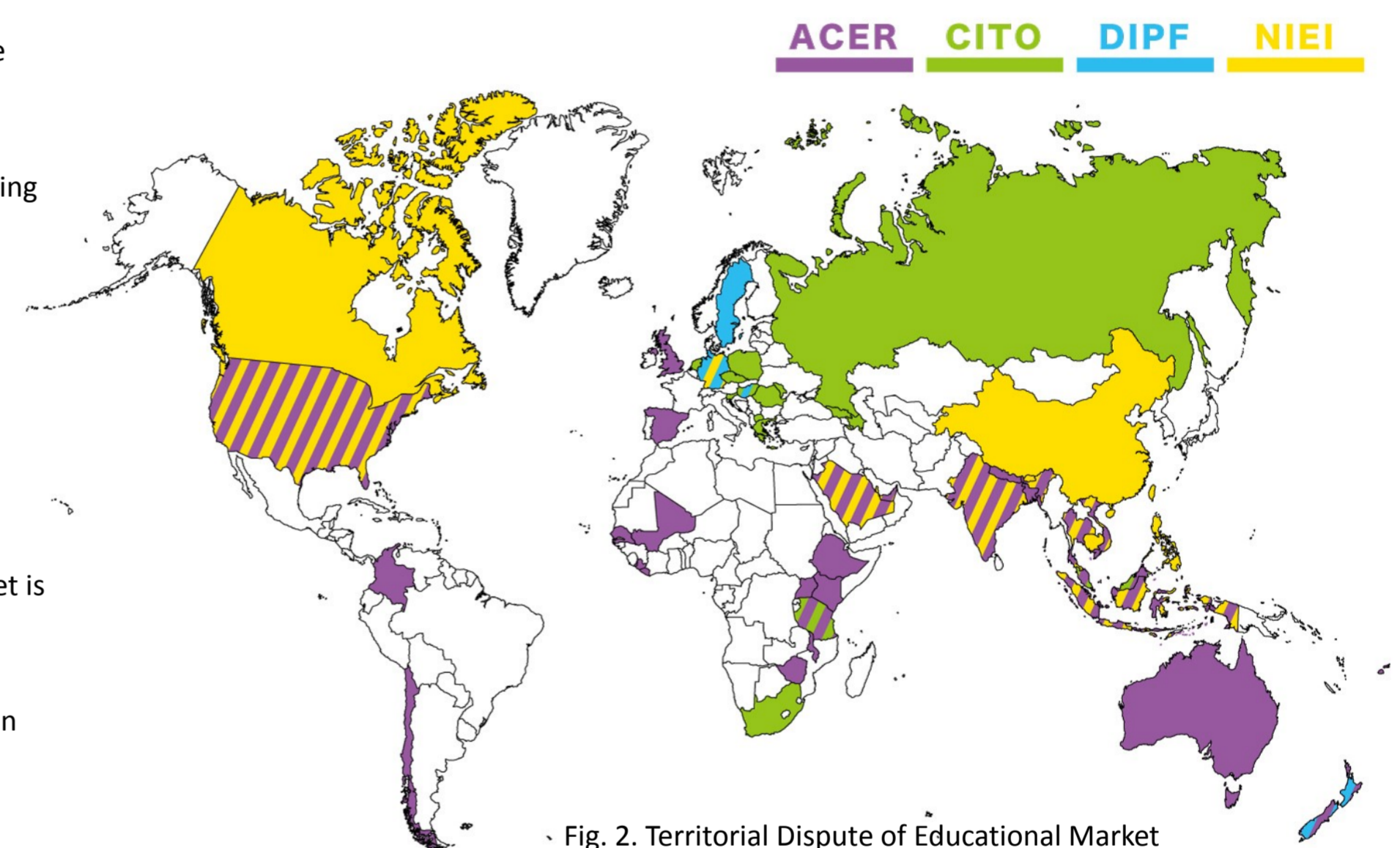
Major findings from the interviews and document analysis are summarized on the world map (Fig. 2.). The map visualizes the phenomenon of the rise of the global education policy market.

- ◆ The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has been leading the development of the PISA test, and they have relations with English speaking countries. ACER is financially independent from government, and they gain income from selling their educational services overseas.
- ◆ The Central Institute for Test Development (Cito), which has the advantage on test item development, is selling their consulting services to Eastern Europe, and gaining revenue from third parties (World Bank, EU, etc.). Cito is the central (national) institute, but was privatized in 1999. They started international activities approximately 20 years ago.
- ◆ The German Institute for International Education Research (DiPF) has launched the spinoff company TBA21 to sell their service on computer based assessment and survey solutions.
- ◆ The National Institute of Education, Singapore (NIE) created the for-profit consulting company, NIE International Pte. Ltd. (NIEI) in 2009. They earn 9.2 million SGD (about 5.7 million EUR) a year in revenue from Middle Eastern, ASEAN, and Asian countries.

An interesting point is that those actors form their territories and it seems that a territorial dispute for the educational market is occurring in Africa, the Middle East, and ASEAN countries.

A general manager of NIEI, said 'NIEI is actually a company that was formed to export Singapore's education expertise to the world. Our Ministry of Education understand that NIEI can play a very important role to internationalize Singapore's Education to the world' (interviewed on 2014/07/08).

An executive at one of the national educational research institutes said 'I think ACER had understood very early that PISA is a door-opener for international business' (interviewed on 2015/06/29).



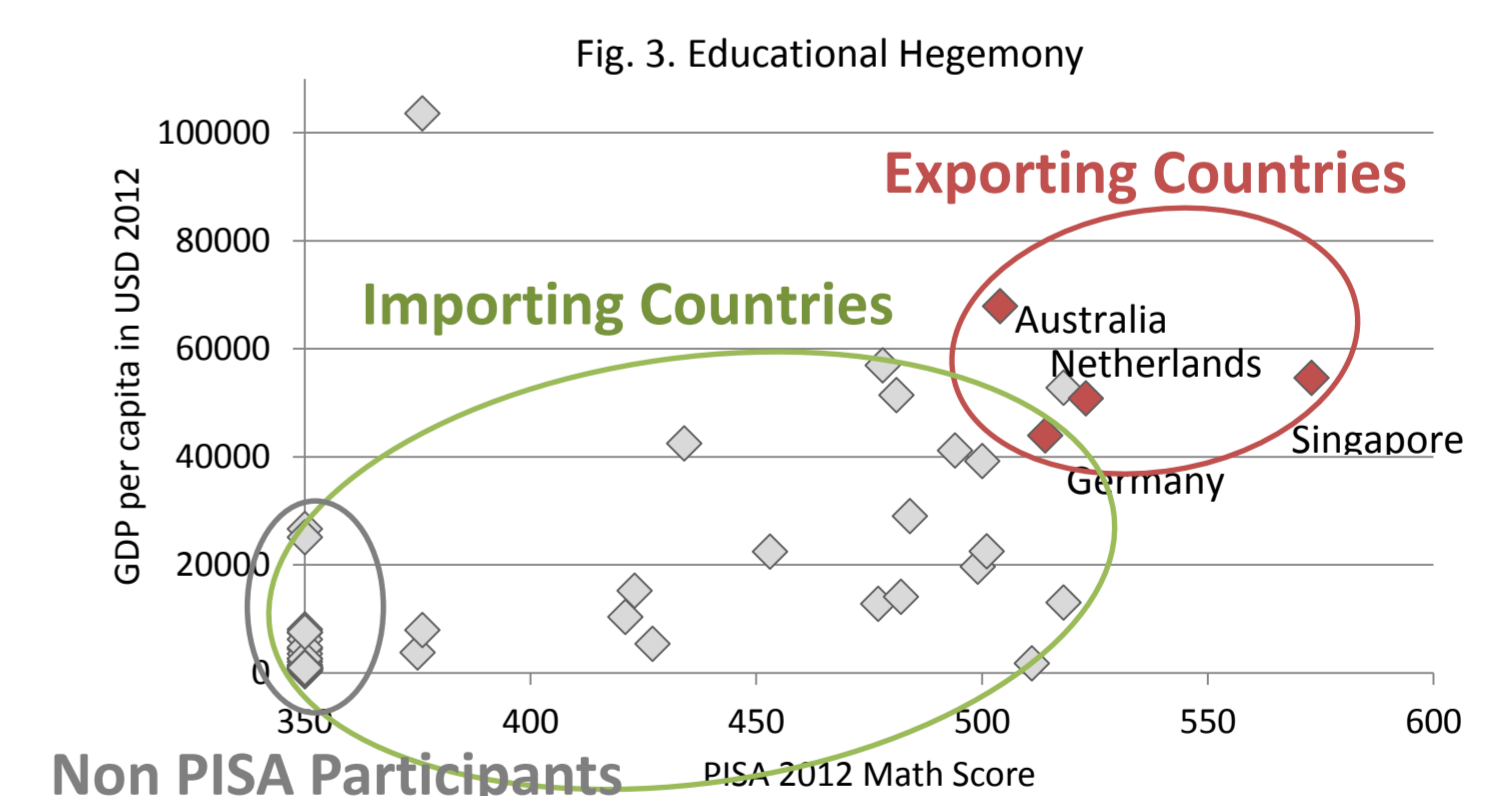
3. Impact of the Global Education Policy Market

Analysis

To analyse the impact of the global education policy market, this research analysed the seller buyer relationship. Fig. 3. shows that major service providers in this market have commonly achieved high scores on the PISA test. They are also rich countries. On the other hand, the customers have average or lower scores or have not joined the PISA study, and have relatively low GDP status. This imbalanced relationship is the new situation of hegemony through educational performance incorporated with economic power. 'Singapore has done very well over 30, 40 years of education. OECD PISA, TIMSS, we are always very high. People want to learn our math and science education'. (interview at NIEI, 2014/07/08).

Until the 1990s, not so many developing countries participated in large-scale international assessments. But recently, more than 70 % of developing countries have joined. Their participation is often encouraged and enabled through external support (Lockheed, 2013). PISA has a Governing Board composed of representatives of OECD members and PISA associates. But other countries outside of the OECD, or not participating in PISA, have no chance to take action against this mechanism.

The OECD operates 'PISA for Development' in Ecuador, Guatemala, Senegal, Zambia, Cambodia, and Paraguay. This project aims to increase developing countries' use of PISA assessments and support to establish a resilient and fair society. But the more developing countries join the standardized assessment platform, the more the market grows, and the more stably the hegemonic structure is established. Academics often claim to ensure the transparency of operating assessments, but also need to be concerned with the distribution process of the assessment results.



4. Conclusion

Conclusion

As a challenge to the 'New Paradigm' of comparative studies, this research dared not focus on a comparison of individual countries, but highlighted the rise and impact of the global market for education policy. To conclude this research, three perspectives emerged. 1) As a result of each country's effort to improve their educational performance by learning from others' success, as a whole, the global education policy market emerged. 2) The assessment has no influence by itself, but incorporated with the market mechanism, the market situation forms a power balance of educational hegemony. 3) For this reason, consciousness of transparency of the distribution process of the assessment and the results of comparative studies are becoming important as well as how to conduct the assessment and research.

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