EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING AND STATISTICAL EDUCATION

Kyung Ae Park
Director of Training Planning Division, Statistical Training Institute (STI)
713 Hanbat-daero, Seo-gu, Daejeon 302-847, Korea
kaypark@korea.kr

INTRODUCTION

Official statistics can play a key role in policy making of the Korean government's 3.0 era characterized by the mottos of 'open and sharing' and 'communication and cooperation'. Cooperation among agencies for utilizing data is critical because of challenges of official statistics: availability of data due to new technologies, demand of more timely statistics, competition with other providers of statistics (e.g. Big Data), budget restrictions and demand of efficiency. Producing good quality information on time is very important for policy making. However, if users do not understand the limitations of the data, risks of evidence-based policy increase tremendously. Thus, statistical education of national statistical offices should focus on narrowing the knowledge gap between producers and diverse users.

STATISTICAL TRAINING IN STI

Government officials are the major target of training for statistical competency, as they are key producers, users, and policy makers. The STI, an affiliate of KOSTAT(Statistics Korea), recognizes training needs through KOSTAT policies of recruitment, HR development, CDP, BSC, and performance management, which are also influenced by the overall policies of the Korean Government. We also locate training needs through a range of surveys, discussions, and formal and informal networks with professional groups and government agencies.

However, the impact of statistical education is limited, as most formal trainings are composed of short term courses (1 to 5 days) for officials with diverse academic background. So, long-term formal programs have been introduced in particular categories for KOSTAT staff to broaden their knowledge and skills: In-classroom courses to develop job competency, which are organized with a small number of trainees applying rigorous diagnosis and evaluation. After the successful completion of the specialized courses, the trainees will be given special assignment and incentives to achieve professionalism.

Through e-learning (cyber education) and u-learning (mobile learning) programs, the STI provides diverse introductory courses to general public including government officials, and mostly survey-related contents to staff of local KOSTAT offices so that trainees may study at anytime, anywhere, which encourages voluntary and self-motivated study. As challenges have arisen in response to the rapid IT developments, blended-learning, action learning, and customized training programs have been attempted. Yet, their effectiveness is to be measured.

CONCLUSION

Government officials of KOSTAT headquarters and other ministries favor more specialized courses, while local government officials who are mostly enumerators heavily depend on e-learning and u-learning. Although the efficiency of cyber education is proven in monetary terms by the number of trainees, more efforts are needed to improve contents. ROI (return on investment) of statistical education is difficult to measure. Contents need to be redesigned.

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