

A Systematic Review of Research-Informed Educational Policy and Practice in Turkey

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Abstract

This systematic review examines the extent to which educational policy and practice in Turkey are informed by research evidence. Drawing on national and international literature, the review explores the theoretical foundations of evidence-based policymaking, the current status of research-informed policy in Turkey, and the challenges faced in bridging the gap between research and practice. The analysis highlights recent national initiatives, such as the integration of digital technologies and the development of data-driven assessment systems, while also identifying persistent obstacles, including limited data transparency, insufficient stakeholder engagement, and the lack of a comprehensive national evaluation framework. The review underscores the importance of fostering collaboration among policymakers, researchers, and practitioners, and emphasizes the need for a robust data infrastructure to support long-term, context-sensitive educational reforms. Ultimately, the findings suggest that while Turkey has made significant strides toward evidence-informed education, further efforts are required to embed research systematically into all stages of the policy cycle and to ensure that reforms are both effective and equitable.

Keywords: Evidence-based policy, Educational reform, Data-driven decision making, Turkish education system, Research-informed practice, Policy implementation, Cultural diversity in education

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Introduction

Research-informed educational policy goes beyond merely applying scientific findings; it reflects a dynamic process where evidence guides practice, and learners actively shape their own learning paths. Exploring how individuals learn is a key component of research-informed policy, as it enables the development of educational strategies that align with learners' evolving needs and interests. Applying techniques to reach set goals represents just one dimension of educational practice. Equally important are the deeper questions concerning the ethical, social, and political implications of these approaches, and how their effectiveness may vary depending on the specific educational context in which they are applied (Eryaman, 2006). When educational plans and strategies fail to reflect the specific context or discipline, they often fall short in practice. As Rosen (1993, 2003) argues, education is not static; it evolves through ongoing reflection on prior research and purposeful adaptation to new realities.

Theoretical Foundations of Evidence-Based Policy

Educational policy that draws on research is inherently intertwined with classroom practice, as evidence plays a central role in shaping both instructional methods and policy decisions. Implementing educational policies is not a neutral act—it is deeply shaped by research emerging from disciplines such as pedagogy, sociology, and learning sciences, which inform how policies are interpreted and enacted in practice. This research-oriented approach not only guides educational practice but also serves as a methodological framework for data collection in fields such as education, psychology, and policy analysis. At its core, evidence-based policymaking seeks to integrate the professional judgment of decision-makers with high-quality findings drawn from systematic and methodologically sound research (Segone, 2004). When policymakers genuinely engage with research findings, those insights are more likely to inform meaningful changes in classroom practices and school policies. Moreover, in schools that embrace research, evidence should be seen not as fixed knowledge handed down to teachers, but as an evolving process rooted in classroom experience and shaped by the realities of teaching and learning (Godfrey, 2014). Indeed, teachers do not simply follow curriculum directives; they often shape the profession from within. Whether it's through small-scale research in their classrooms, contributing to curriculum discussions, or taking part in union-related actions, their involvement reaches beyond daily teaching tasks (Eryaman, 2007).

Systematic reviews are considered one of the most important methods for summarising evidence from multiple studies and involve rigorous procedures that include extensive searching, critical appraisal and structured evaluation, as well as taking into account the diversity and setting of the studies included (Cooper & Hedges, 1994), and policymakers often rely on single studies or evaluations that are not as comprehensive. Additionally, unequal access to quality information, particularly online, is a key

obstacle to evidence-based policymaking (Segone, 2004), so policymakers can use a variety of evidence types, including systematic reviews, individual research studies, pilots, case studies, expert opinions, and online information (Turan & Kılıçoğlu, 2017). While pilot and case studies offer valuable, real-world examples of how policies work in practice, they are often used simply because they are readily available. Expert input—often from advisory groups or consultants—also plays a significant role in shaping educational policy. As Segone (2004) emphasizes, truly evidence-based policymaking depends not only on academic research, but also on careful monitoring, lived institutional knowledge, and proven practices from the field.

Current Status of Research-Informed Policy in Turkey

In recent years, education officials in Turkey have shown a growing interest in grounding policies and practices in scientific research. This shift can be seen across various domains, from curriculum development to the integration of new learning technologies. Public statements by Ministry officials, including the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), have repeatedly referenced the need to address urgent issues in the education system using data and past experiences (Turkish Education Association [TEDMEM], 2023). Yet, the extent to which this discourse is reflected in actual policy implementation remains unclear. Several policy documents issued by the MoNE emphasize the strategic role of technology integration as a catalyst for educational modernization. In line with this vision, classrooms across Turkey have increasingly adopted digital tools, reflecting a broader shift toward technology-enhanced learning environments. Among these innovations, smartboards have become a common feature in classrooms. Evidence suggests that this change has contributed to improvements in student achievement. For example, a mixed-method study conducted in both Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus reported a strong and statistically significant link between the use of smartboards and academic performance (Akar, 2020).

Evidence-informed approaches in education have opened new pathways for including diverse voices in decision-making processes and for recognizing the practical relevance of research in shaping educational practice (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020).

Data Systems and Assessment Tools

In Turkey, platforms such as the Ministry of National Education Information System (MEBBIS), the Electronic School System (e-Okul), and the Management System of Education Financing and Expenses (TEFBIS) have been established to support data-driven planning and administration. Tools like the ABIDE (Akıllı Bilişim Destekli İzleme ve Değerlendirme, a national computer-based assessment system in Turkey) assessment, nationwide transition exams, and international studies—such as TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy

Study), and TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey)—also provide valuable insights that help identify current educational challenges. The 2024 report emphasizes that the ABİDE system has the potential to measure students' higher-order thinking skills, but it needs methodological improvement. The lack of comprehensive assessment systems at the national level makes policy development particularly challenging in strategic areas such as science (TEDMEM, 2025). Yet, despite numerous promising reforms introduced since the early 2000s, implementation has often lagged behind, limiting their real-world impact (Atasoy & Cemaloğlu, 2018). According to the 2024 TEDMEM report, the lack of a comprehensive national monitoring and evaluation mechanism in Turkey still leads to policy-making processes being shaped mostly in a short-term and reactive manner. Difficulties are experienced in interpreting the results of international exams on a national scale, which limits data-driven decision-making processes (TEDMEM, 2025).

In societies where knowledge is a central driver of progress, improving educational standards remains a top priority. Around the world, policymakers continue to explore new ways to enhance the quality of national education systems. Yet, efforts to synthesize research on a broad scale can sometimes reduce the level of direct control held by policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. As Gough (2004) notes, while systematic reviews offer valuable insights, they can also shift the focus toward broader democratic accountability in decision-making. In this context, it becomes essential for policymakers to critically engage with research findings, approaching them with objectivity and openness. Recognizing this need, the OECD (2020) recommended that Turkey strengthen local strategic planning and expand its research and analytical capacity—particularly by drawing on the expertise of universities to inform labour market analysis. Still, questions remain about the extent to which Turkish educational reforms have genuinely relied on evidence. Although many policy initiatives appear well-intentioned on paper, their implementation at the school level has often fallen short. A major contributing factor is the limited use of rigorous educational research and the tendency to introduce reforms without sufficient empirical grounding.

Scientific evidence is valued for its objectivity—it can be independently verified and is produced through rigorous methodological standards. In contrast, expertise enters the policy process through advisory roles, often involving consultation with governmental bodies and decision-makers (Ledermann, 2014). While expertise carries strategic weight due to its perceived relevance, its legitimacy is not always transparent; as Hadorn et al. (2022) point out, who qualifies as an expert depends heavily on selection processes and underlying assumptions. Within Turkey's highly centralized education system, policy decisions often bypass both evidence and expertise. Instead, those holding formal authority tend to shape educational policy based on hierarchical power structures rather than collaborative or research-informed processes (Turan & Yılmaz Kılıçoğlu, 2017). Although education unions in Turkey can shape employment-related policies to some extent, their influence remains limited

by the broader economic agenda of the government. Their involvement was notable in the adoption of the 4+4+4 education reform, which restructured the school system into segmented stages (Baydar, 2016). However, the reform faced considerable criticism from teachers and school administrators, particularly due to its weak infrastructural support and low student enrollment rates (Aybek & Aslan, 2015; Bavlı & Aydın, 2015; Boz, 2013; Doğan et al., 2014; Örs et al., 2013). In addition, the rollout suffered from poor communication about the system's goals and structure (Başaran, 2016), and failed to address the diverse interests and learning needs of students (Düşmez & Bulut, 2015).

Challenges in Policy Implementation

The policy-making process in Turkey, particularly under the framework of the Career Ladder for Teachers (CLT) regulation, has often been described as highly politicized, bureaucratic, and hierarchical. It tends to operate in a top-down, closed, and government-driven manner, where democratic deliberation and broad stakeholder engagement are frequently overlooked (Keser-Aschenberger, 2012). While there is a growing body of literature on evidence-based education policies, there remains a notable gap in studies focusing on school-level evaluation through big data. Despite repeated reforms over the years, the disconnect between educational research and policy implementation persists. The integration of research-based evidence into higher education planning in Turkey remains limited, largely due to the lack of dedicated research centers and an underdeveloped culture of policy evaluation (Canbolat, 2018). This persistent gap became particularly evident during the 2024 curriculum reform initiated by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), which exposed serious shortcomings in transparency and planning. The reform process moved forward without a publicly shared needs analysis or any pilot implementation, making it vulnerable to unforeseen challenges in practice. These gaps increased the likelihood of unforeseen challenges in practice and emphasized the need for stronger feedback and evaluation systems, such as the Monitoring and Evaluation System of the Board of Education and Discipline (TTKB-İDES) developed by the MoNE (TEDMEM, 2025). Rather than relying on rigorous, data-informed analyses, decision-makers often turn to rapid, case-specific solutions—a tendency reinforced by Turkey's centralized governance structure. This pattern became especially visible during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the MoNE swiftly expanded the Education Informatics Network (Eğitim Bilişim Ağı [EBA]) digital platform and partnered with major telecom companies to provide students with remote learning access (Özer, 2020). In the curriculum change implemented by the MoNE in 2024, the lack of transparent sharing of needs analysis and the absence of pilot implementations led to weak pedagogical and institutional foundations for the reform process (TEDMEM, 2025). This situation brought about unforeseen problems in practice, making evaluation processes even more critical.

The OECD's 2022 Education Policy Outlook underscores how global crises—such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and geopolitical conflicts—have reshaped the context in which

education systems operate. It stresses the need for short-term forecasting, adaptability in the face of uncertainty, and robust monitoring to build more resilient educational frameworks (OECD, 2022). In response to these emerging challenges, Turkey has introduced an elective course on environmental education and climate change for students in the sixth through eighth grades, aiming to foster knowledge, values, and critical thinking around environmental and societal crises (Tunca et al., 2022). These developments reflect a growing recognition that crisis events can serve as catalysts for reform, creating momentum for preventive and research-informed approaches in national education policy.

Key National Initiatives and Evaluation Mechanisms

Launched in 2010, the Movement to Enhance Opportunities and Improve Technology (FATİH) aimed to transform classroom learning through the integration of digital tools. The project was initiated as a collaborative effort involving multiple government ministries, the Treasury, and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), all coordinated by the MoNE. This partnership between the MoNE and the Scientific and TÜBİTAK marked a meaningful attempt to align educational technology policy with scientific insight. In parallel, Turkey pursued the creation of 20 research and development (R&D) centers within Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions to support the production of high-demand educational materials and enhance local innovation capacity.

The 2022 Education Evaluation Report provides a comprehensive review of the Turkish education system through a range of key performance indicators (TEDMEM, 2022). It examines progress in areas such as primary and secondary education, vocational and technical training, special education, student guidance services, and private schooling. The report also addresses broader themes including governance, education financing, quality assurance policies, and teacher development processes, while situating Turkey's performance in an international context. Among the key issues highlighted are government transitions, migration-related educational challenges, and teacher appointment regulations. Complementing this, the MoNE's 2023 Education Vision emphasizes that evidence-based metrics indicate a drift in upper secondary natural science schools from their original scientific objectives (MoNE, 2018). The vision proposes that school-specific development models be created to track and support institutional progress at both local and national levels.

The Pilot Implementation and Evaluation Report of the Secondary Education Adaptation Programme, conducted by the MoNE in collaboration with UNICEF, offered a valuable opportunity to assess a policy initiative prior to its nationwide rollout and to share its outcomes transparently (Yeşilyaprak et al., 2014). Similarly, the 2021 Education Evaluation Report highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted educational processes in Turkey for nearly a year and a half. Despite this prolonged interruption, the system failed to generate a comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable response to address the resulting learning losses (TEDMEM, 2021). Critics of the evidence-based

education movement often question whether such approaches can be maintained over time in complex and unpredictable policy environments (Eryaman & Schneider, 2017). For research-informed policies to have long-term impact, they must be supported by resilient systems capable of anticipating disruptions and generating timely, context-sensitive solutions.

Recommendations for Policymakers and Practitioners

Educational reform efforts are typically driven by the dual goals of improving student learning and increasing school efficiency. Research has made meaningful contributions to these reforms, informing areas such as curriculum development, assessment practices, teaching strategies, and leadership models (Aksit, 2007). However, for reforms to yield deeper and more lasting impacts, it is essential to acknowledge the dynamic interplay between research and policy. In the context of Turkish education, a broader and more diverse evidence base is needed to guide decisions. Scientific knowledge, when systematically gathered and applied, can support more rational and responsive policy development. In particular, big data holds promise for conducting long-term evaluations that can track patterns and outcomes over time. One useful framework in this regard is the Public Good-Based and Evidence-Based Evaluation Model, which supports the design of both internal and external evaluation systems capable of leveraging large-scale data for policy reflection and improvement (Eryaman & Schneider, 2017). A key recommendation from the TEDMEM 2024 report is the establishment of an integrated national data infrastructure. Such a system is essential for tracking progress, guiding reforms with reliable data, ensuring efficient allocation of resources, and supporting long-term educational planning (TEDMEM, 2025). Research in education policy provides a meaningful base for comparing systems, assessing reforms, and guiding long-term improvements. It also helps us understand how national education goals are shaped by global policy movements—and how they respond to them. Yet, what works in one setting, even through rigorous methods like randomized controlled trials (RCTs), might fall short in another (Pellegrini & Vivanet, 2021). This often comes down to the deeply rooted cultural, regional, and socioeconomic factors that define each education system. In Turkey's case, effective policy requires not only solid evidence, but also a sensitivity to the country's diverse contexts and local needs.

Building an Evidence-Informed and Inclusive Policy Framework

Turkey currently hosts over 3.5 million Syrian refugees, along with hundreds of thousands of individuals from other nationalities—primarily from Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan—who are either seeking asylum or living under temporary protection. In light of this demographic reality, there is a growing need for inclusive education policies that ensure the active participation of immigrant students and provide them with equitable learning opportunities. As Maya (2021) suggests, comparative education research can play a critical role in guiding such policies by offering frameworks that account

for cultural, linguistic, and structural differences across educational systems. Each year, thousands of students in Turkey participate in high-stakes national exams, including the Field Proficiency Test (AYT), the Basic Proficiency Test (TYT), and the High School Entrance Exam (LGS). Yet, data from 2022 reveal a troubling trend: even among students who are admitted to over half (54.8%) of the programs accepting LGS scores, few fall within the top 10% of test-takers (TEDMEM, 2023). These findings raise important questions about the validity of current assessment mechanisms and their ability to reflect student potential accurately. If educational policies are to be grounded in reliable evidence, then central evaluation systems must be critically examined. Despite the large volume of data collected by national institutions such as the MoNE, the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), and the Student Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM), the statistical information made publicly available remains insufficient for meaningful policy analysis (Canbolat, 2018).

Comparative educational research often reveals the cultural values and beliefs that shape how different countries approach education. When we look beyond the technical functions of research, we begin to see its deeper role—not just in transferring know-how, but in reflecting how societies understand teaching and learning (Biesta, 2007). As Eryaman (2006) points out, education is never just about skills; it's also about the moral and political ideas that guide how schools operate. From this perspective, the cultural dimension of educational research isn't an add-on to its technical side—it's just as essential for understanding and improving what happens in classrooms (Biesta, 2007).

The majority of studies on Turkish education policy tend to focus on the implementation and evaluation of specific reforms, while only a limited number address the actual policy-making process. A widely used method for understanding what is known in a given field—particularly to inform policymakers, practitioners, and the general public—is to consult with experts. Expert evaluations are valuable not only because they synthesize academic evidence, but also because they offer insights into the quality and relevance of that evidence, as well as incorporate professional and contextual knowledge that may not be explicitly documented (Gough, 2004). When developing evidence-based education policies, it is essential to establish an evaluation system that allows for long-term and multidimensional analysis of projects. Such a system should aim to assess how effective policies are over time, rather than simply quantifying how many initiatives have been introduced. In this context, curricula and textbooks designed based on research findings must be carefully examined by decision-makers who are committed to using qualified, accurate, and relevant data. However, it would be overly optimistic to claim that the current information infrastructure fully supports evidence-informed policymaking in Turkey. The absence of rigorous, policy-specific studies and the existence of conflicting findings indicate that the foundation for such infrastructure is still incomplete (OECD, 2007). Therefore, future educational policies must avoid contradicting the body of research already produced by policymakers and researchers, and instead be grounded in a consistent and critically evaluated evidence base.

There has been considerable debate regarding the reliance on Web of Science index rankings as a means of evaluating the quality of educational research and the academic contributions of individual scholars for purposes of promotion and tenure within Turkish higher education. At the same time, institutions such as the MoNE and other governmental bodies often remain skeptical about the practical value of educational research in shaping and assessing public policy. While some policies reference quality enhancement, they frequently fall short in addressing the systemic challenges that impact educational outcomes. Moving forward, strategic decisions regarding quality assessment are likely to be shaped by administrators who oversee the MoNE's evaluation frameworks. In this regard, it becomes essential to examine how department heads across institutions perceive the MoNE's policies and their implications for educational effectiveness. Meaningful policy evaluation must also involve consultation with the academic community, particularly with research organizations dedicated to educational studies. Crucially, teacher educators carry a special responsibility: they must help preservice teachers see how educational theory and practice are shaped not only by a shared intellectual tradition, but also by a commitment to critical and forward-thinking inquiry (Eryaman, 2007).

The focus and nature of educational research can offer important insights into a nation's priorities and its evolving educational needs. For this reason, it is essential that decision-makers consistently integrate updated scientific findings into educational planning, particularly those that reflect the national context and developmental goals. As policies continue to evolve, it becomes increasingly important that they are informed by the latest research paradigms—not only for the benefit of the current system, but for the broader future of society at large. In other words, just as policy adjustments are expected in other sectors, educational policies should be routinely revisited and revised to remain relevant. This process requires bringing together all key stakeholders in education to engage with and act upon the most current scientific evidence. While much educational research has traditionally focused on improving access and the quality of resources, greater emphasis should also be placed on understanding what drives households to invest in education. These underlying factors are critical to building more equitable and responsive educational systems (Ranjan & Prakash, 2012). As emphasized in the 2024 TEDMEM report, core structural challenges—including insufficient data transparency, the lack of coherent teacher workforce planning, and the absence of a comprehensive assessment system—continue to hinder effective policymaking. For future reforms to be impactful, policymakers must invest in system-wide monitoring tools and collaborate with stakeholders to design evidence-informed teacher education strategies (TEDMEM, 2025).

Policy Implications

This review clearly shows that for Turkey to build a stronger, fairer, and more future-oriented education system, research must be at the heart of policy decisions. While steps such as integrating digital technologies into classrooms and creating national assessment systems are promising, they often

lack coordination and fall short of delivering long-term, meaningful change. What's urgently needed is a culture of policymaking rooted in reliable, context-aware data and guided by long-term goals—rather than reactive, short-term solutions. As Erbaş (2021) emphasizes, developing a strong national data infrastructure is essential to ensure that educational practices are both evidence-based and continuously evolving.

Equally important is the recognition that policy cannot be made in isolation. Lasting change requires close collaboration between the Ministry of National Education, universities, independent research bodies, and the people working in schools every day. Teachers, school leaders, and local communities must have an active voice in shaping education policies—so that what's written in documents reflects the realities inside classrooms. This is especially vital for students from diverse backgrounds, including immigrant and refugee learners. Erbaş (2022) highlights teachers' awareness of both the opportunities and the challenges of cultural diversity in schools, and why policies need to be inclusive, flexible, and responsive to real classroom dynamics. Additionally, as Çetin and Maral (2022) have demonstrated, there is already a growing body of educational research in Turkey that could guide more effective and efficient policymaking—if it were used more systematically. Their analysis of higher education shows that when resource allocation is examined through a research-based lens, gaps and opportunities for improvement become clearer across the system.

Ultimately, for research-informed policy to make a real difference, there must be a shift in mindset. Data should not be locked away—it should be transparent, accessible, and open to scrutiny. Everyone involved in education, from policymakers to classroom teachers, should be encouraged to engage with both national and international research critically and constructively. When these values become part of the everyday policy process, Turkey will be in a much stronger position to meet current challenges and create an education system where all students have the opportunity to thrive.

Conclusion

In this review, we aimed to explore how research might better inform educational policy in Turkey, particularly by identifying current challenges and practical opportunities for reform. It explored the influence of research on policy formulation and implementation, as well as the conditions under which that influence could be strengthened within the Turkish educational landscape. Given that educational decisions are often driven by those in positions of authority, a persistent gap between research and practice remains evident. When evidence and professional expertise are overlooked, the resolution of critical educational challenges is likely to be delayed. To close this gap, it is essential that national and international research reports are systematically reviewed and considered by policymakers. Such engagement can help lay the groundwork for more effective, inclusive, and evidence-based educational policies.

Turkey has been actively reforming its education system, often commissioning reports to guide policy decisions. These reports tend to carry weight because they draw on detailed research and careful analysis. Still, if Turkey is to establish more comprehensive and effective evidence-based educational policies, several persistent challenges must be addressed. Greater data transparency, stronger professional research collaborations, and enhanced knowledge-sharing mechanisms are all essential for advancing evidence-informed policymaking. While the MoNE collects a significant amount of data on schools, teachers, and students, this information is rarely made accessible to researchers or the public—a limitation that hinders the development of truly data-informed policies (Turan & Kılıçoğlu, 2017). To address this issue, Turkey could benefit from national monitoring and evaluation systems that clearly define what students should know at each stage of their education and assess how well they are actually performing (TEDMEM, 2023). Building such a foundation would allow policymakers to create more targeted, responsive, and equitable educational strategies.

In Turkey, educational research is largely driven by universities, with much of the funding provided by TÜBİTAK. While universities and the MoNE continue to support studies in the field, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played only a modest role in shaping or financing such research. Support also comes from European Union institutions, particularly in areas aligned with policy development and innovation. YÖK, which oversees the Bologna Process, encourages research that aligns with market-oriented goals, highlighting competitiveness and long-term sustainability. However, the direction of research production is often shaped more by the expectations of international frameworks or the agendas of national and European funding bodies than by the actual needs of the local education system (Ion & Iucu, 2015). Student performance in international assessments offers valuable insight into the state of national education systems and how learning outcomes are linked to broader economic indicators such as individual income and societal well-being (Hanushek & Woessman, 2011). Yet, the research environment itself can be shaped by more than intellectual curiosity—limited financial resources and narrow access to research opportunities may constrain academic inquiry. In Turkey, the standardization of academic programs and the restricted scope for independent research are among the most significant outcomes of efforts to institutionalize research within higher education. To ensure that education policy is both responsive and forward-looking, investment in education must be balanced across all levels—from early childhood through to higher education—with thoughtful and sustained financial support.

In Turkey, the shift toward evidence-informed education appears to be gradually gaining momentum, largely driven by political will and targeted initiatives. However, this movement has yet to be systematically embedded across all levels of the education system. Education policy is deeply intertwined with government and ideology, and policymaking often reflects broader political values and priorities. While the state can play a constructive role in promoting tools and strategies that enhance

educational practice, excessive intervention may hinder the autonomy of practitioners and limit the effectiveness of policymaking processes (Baron, 2016). The beliefs and ideological orientations of policymakers and other stakeholders must therefore be taken into account when analyzing education policy, as these factors significantly influence how policies are designed, interpreted, and implemented.

This article has demonstrated the fragmented nature of research-informed educational policy in Turkey. Despite the presence of data systems and evaluations, these tools are not fully embedded in the policy cycle. Moving forward, fostering stronger collaboration between universities, the MoNE, and independent research bodies is essential. This review aims to enrich the growing conversation around research-informed policymaking in emerging education systems by offering a grounded and context-sensitive analysis of the Turkish case. It highlights how evidence-based approaches can be meaningfully adapted to local realities.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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Ethical Statement

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Credit Author Statement

Mehmet Emrah Kuru was responsible for the design and execution of the systematic review, literature selection, synthesis, and writing of the manuscript. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Yunus Eryaman provided academic guidance, reviewed the work for conceptual clarity and coherence, and contributed to the final editing. Both authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

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