

USE OF EVIDENCE BASED RESEARCH IN POLICY MAKING IN UGANDA: A CASE OF THE UGANDA NATIONAL GRAIN TRADE POLICY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL
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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted to any institution of learning.

Signature.....

Date: July 01, 2026

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APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my family members who advised, supported and mentored me throughout my education up to university level. Above all, I thank the Almighty God for guidance and provision towards completion of this dissertation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EBPM	-	Evidence-Based Policy Making
NGOs	-	Non Governmental Organizations
VEDCO	-	Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns
BRAC	-	Building Resources Across Communities
WFP	-	World Food Programme
MADIFA	-	Masindi District Farmers Association
DFID	-	Department for international Development
TEHIP	-	Tanzania Essential Human Interventions Project
ERP	-	Evidence Research Policy
EAC	-	East African Community
UGTA	-	Uganda Grain Traders Association
MTIC	-	Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives
DHMTs-	-	Districts Health Management Teams
EBP	-	Evidence Based Policy
MAAIF -	-	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries
ITC	-	International Trade Centre
AATF	-	African Agricultural Technology Foundation
NARO	-	National Agricultural Research Organization
RCTs	-	Randomized Control Trials

ABSTRACT

This study aimed at establishing the application of research based on evidence-in-policy making in Uganda, taking a case study of the National Grain Trade policy. The study was guided by three objectives which include:(i) What evidence research informed the design for the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda? (ii) How can policy makers better incorporate research evidence in the policy making process? (iii) What barriers can prevent access and utilization of research evidence to inform the policy making process in Uganda?

The study utilized desk-based research to review existing articles, journals, and policy documents regarding the National Grain Trade policy. In objective (i) the study found that Technocrats undertook field studies and engaged stakeholders from the public and private sectors as well as international aid and development actors, asking questions and taking notes to inform the design of the National Grain Trade policy .In objective (ii)The study found that there are dozen ways policy makers can better incorporate research evidence in the policy making process some which include:(1)Strengthening structures for aggregating stakeholders' interests and mechanisms for open circulation of ideas, (2) Improving dialogue especially in the transmission of research from researcher to decision-maker during the policy-making process, (3)Seeking, emphasising and promoting policy support, (4) Increasing trust amongst policy actors over the transparency of each part's interests, (5)Incorporating any relevant research evidence within the decision-making process. In objective (iii) the study found that there are more than a dozen barriers that can prevent access and utilization of research evidence in the policy making process in Uganda. These barriers include: (1) Pressure to process information quickly, (2) Limited capacity, including time, and scarcer resources, (3) Evidence being ignored, (4) political pragmatics and contingencies, such as timeframes, legislative terms, institutional capacity, and unforeseen events.

The study recommends increased sensitization of technocrats on the significance of evidence-based research in policy making.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 Historical Background

Earlier studies on Evidence-Based Policy (EBP) did not systematically examine implementation (Oliver & Boaz, 2019). Only a few exceptions exist. Scholars suggest that combining insights from science adaptation and policy implementation research can improve understanding. These scholars include Cairney (2016), Nutley et al. (2019), and Head (2020). Political science scholars focus on inter-organizational interactions and governance. According to Lodge & Wegrich (2014), governance involves creating conditions that enable group activities. Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) draws inspiration from Enlightenment-era thinkers. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) supported an inductive, empirical approach based on rigorous testing. John Dewey, a 20th-century philosopher, introduced "instrumentalism," a concept found in EBPM (Cairney, 2016). Scientific management, developed by Taylor (1911), was a major 20th-century advancement. Other developments included performance measurement based on cost accounting (Sargiacomo & Gomes, 2011) and economic indicators linked to social indicators (Innes & Booher, 2015). Donald Campbell (1969) argued that social changes should undergo rigorous experimental evaluation. This idea led to the rise of "Social Engineering" and "Social Experiments" in the USA and social sciences (Cartwright & Hardie, 2012). In criminal justice, Langley et al. (1972) studied whether "group therapy" reduced recidivism rates. Their findings showed no impact (Berk et al., 2018; Nutley et al., 2019). Despite ambitious plans, many major trials faced delivery challenges (Pawson, 2013).

In health and medicine, rational accounting became more influential over time. In the 1990s, US researchers coined the term "evidence-based medicine." They defined it as a systematic approach to reviewing research for clinical decision-making (Greenhalgh et al., 2014). Sackett et al. (1996) refined the definition. They described it as the careful use of current clinical research to manage patients. The Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM)

movement reflected changing expectations in healthcare, emphasizing value for money (Claridge & Fabian, 2005; Coote et al., 2016).

EBM originated from Archie Cochrane's 1972 work on effectiveness and efficiency (Ministry of Health, Malawi, 2018). Since then, academics and practitioners have explored how policy decisions can be based on evidence (Gough et al., 2018). Cochrane and his successors promoted adopting effective clinical interventions while rejecting ineffective ones. Oliver & Cairney (2019) highlighted that this approach relied on rigorous evaluations, such as randomized trials and systematic reviews. The role of research in policy decisions has sparked debate. Although this debate is not new, its nature has evolved. In recent decades, global changes have increased the demand for concrete evidence to guide policy advancements (McIntyre, 2021).

A study by the National Health Services - Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (NHS, 2020) traced this debate back to the mid-20th century. It identified two key developments: (1) The rise of public policy analysis and political science as a distinct discipline, and (2) The application of social science approaches to fields like health services research. Public policy analysis, especially in the US, became an "action science." The goal was to conduct research that directly informs decision-making. This shift responded to formalism and the abstract rationality of Homo economicus (Cairney, 2016). Under Jacob Zuma's presidency in South Africa, government initiatives emphasized "knowledge transfer" from research to policy and practice. Policymakers increasingly engaged in structured knowledge-sharing processes (Head, 2020). This approach also spread across Africa due to rising donor funding and foreign investment. International organizations and governments relied heavily on research-based decision-making (Gough et al., 2018).

1.1.2 Conceptual Background

'Evidence-Based Policy (EBP) is theoretically defined with more than plentiful definitions, ranging from narrow to broad and inclusive. During the initial years of the history of the evidence-based medicine movement, EBP definitions centered on systematic reviews of RCTs as the initial priority for determining the efficacy of health and social policy (Parkhurst, 2017; Cairney, 2016). Huw Davies, Daniels & Lewin (2008) state, is of the opinion that EBPM puts the best available research evidence at the

forefront of policy development and implementation. EBPM is impacting decision-makers to the point where policy, programs, and projects are (Daniels & Lewin, 2008). EBPM can be defined, although "evidence" must.

Conventional EBPM underpins an empirical, science epistemology that stringently assesses quality of evidence before policy decision-making. Arguments require decisions to be evidence-informed based on "facts" from proven study designs. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) were the gold standard of good evidence through systematic review (Nutley et al., 2019; Oliver & Cairney, 2019). EBPM spans policy analysis and policy implementation, within an empiricist framework. The policy-makers attempt to solve economic and social issues using a rational, scientific, and apolitical approach (Schwandt, 1997). Rationalization comes easily in rational models of policy-making, where evidence-based decision-making is at different levels (Parkhurst, 2017).

Sequential models of policy-making have come to be formulated in diverse ways. They are the policy cycle (May & Wildavsky, 1979) and the policy-making system (Smith, 1976). This has been referred to by Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith (1993) as the "phases heuristic" model, later made more specific to deal with the character of the real world (Cairney & Weible, 2017).

Cairney (2016) describes an average policy-making cycle to cover the following stages:

Agenda Setting - Prioritizing and identification of main policy matters, issue definition, and prioritization (Cairney & Oliver, 2020).

Policy Development - Assessment of solutions that may be feasible, cost and impact, and selection of effective policy instruments (Head, 2020).

Legitimation - Legislative approval establishing whether the policy is legitimate, parliamentary consent, acceptability by parties with interests involved, or by referendums (Oliver & Faulkner, 2022).

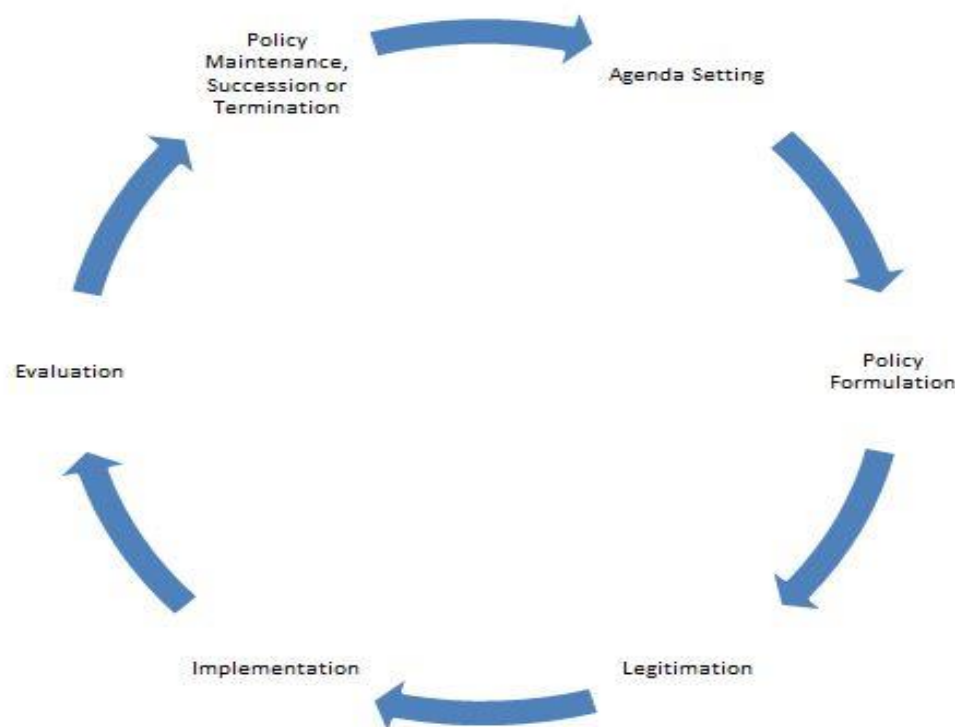
Implementation - Organization of roles, resources to utilize, and surveillance of implementation (Parkhurst, 2017).

Evaluation - To identify whether the policy was carried out in practice and realized its goal (Nutley et al., 2019).

Policy Review - To identify whether the policy should be sustained, altered, or disestablished (Head, 2020).

Evidence is used at every stage of these processes. Evidence informs agenda-setting (environment scanning), policy-formulation (cost-benefit analysis), and appraisal (analysis of the impact of policies). Use of evidence at every step makes policymaking rational and increases its effectiveness (Head, 2020; Oliver & Cairney, 2019).

Diagram 1: Typical 'Policy Making Cycle' (Cairney, 2013)



Here it is explained how social, governmental, and public managerial trends in the United Kingdom set the conditions that were so favorable for Evidence-Based Policy (EBP) concepts and possibilities. There are a number of factors that can be held accountable for the expansion of Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) from 1997 to 2015. Social science therefore made a "utilitarian choice" due to economies and generated lots of data that was relevant to emerging policy (Solesbury, 2001).

Social change, i.e., more complex and dynamic society and declining overall support for governments, is understood to have developed a context which was conducive to the rise of evidence-based policy (Bowler & Karp, 2004). Although there is declining trust across the 1960s and 1990s as indicated by opinion surveys, Bowler and Karp (2004) note there is no valid chronological data to determine if and why trust in the 1950s and 1960s was unusually high. In contrast, European Union public opinion surveys show that satisfaction with democracy among the member states increased throughout the 1990s (European Commission, 2000). The European Commission (2000) demonstrates that 48% of the UK public were satisfied and 47% dissatisfied in 1992, but in 1999 it was 62% satisfied but still 28% for dissatisfaction. Political scandals can also have been involved in the people's trust in politicians. Bowler and Karp (2004), with US and UK evidence, demonstrated that political scandals within members of parliament had a negative impact on the attitude of voters toward democratic processes and institutions. A case in point is that the "cash for questions" scandal involving five UK Conservative members of parliament led to the 1997 Gordon Downey report, and, in 2009, concern over MPs taking advantage of expenses.

A "post-ideological" style of governing was promoted in the 1997 New Labour Party general election manifesto: "New Labour is a movement of aims and values, but not of outworn dogma; what matters is what works" (Labour, 1997). Since the first day it came to power, New Labour started this tradition in its white paper on the modernization of government, in which it set the principle that "policy decisions should be based on sound evidence, where the component of evidence is information." Good-quality information from various sources like expert advice, up-to-date statistics, stakeholders' involvement, UK and overseas research, and scrutiny of previous policy has to be demanded for making improved policies (Cabinet Office, 1999).

When they came to power, New Labour Party was advocating for the state's role in matters of public interest, and EBPM was back on the UK agenda. Solesbury (2001) argued that EBPM paved the way for politics in the direction of less ideology and class-party politics and in the direction of more consumer control (Nutley et al., 2000; Sanderson, 2009; Smith, 2013a). Ironically, EBPM has itself been described as

ideological in the manner in which it canonizes values prone to hegemonic cultural assumptions beneath social performance. These "prescribe efficacy as measurable outcome, professionalism as rhetoric, education as technical transmission, study as regulated enquiry, and 'genuine' evidence as statistical meta-analysis" (Packwood, 2002).

This was a national trend, in the form of the widening of the Audit Commission's remit, and an international trend, in the form of increased accountability for policy effectiveness through bodies like the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Greenhalgh and Russell (2006) and Nutley et al. (2000) commented that "some of the new public managerial precepts, such as defining clear outcomes of performance and encouraging efficiency and cost-effectiveness," fit neatly into the normative aspirations of evidence-based practice.

William Solesbury has termed this shift the "utilitarian turn," and Ken Young had noted that this implied "even a return to an expectation that social sciences research should continue to be useful" (Solesbury, 2001). The late 1990s witnessed this trend in commissioning social research. Contrary to the 1980s, when the preoccupation was with analyzing society, the 1990s were marked by increasing demands from government and philanthropic sponsors of social science research to offer guidance on how best to promote well-being in society. With the election of the New Labour government in 1997, the United Kingdom was swept by an enormous tide of investment and enthusiasm for evidence-based policy. For example, ESRC funding increased from around £70 million in 2000 to over £110 million in 2002 and was £159 million in 2014-15 under the Conservative-led administrations (Solesbury, 2001).

Between 2010-2015, the UK coalition government placed great emphasis on EBPM and, in the period, set up seven sectoral "What Works Centres" to inform policymakers and also practitioners. It was announced by the Cabinet Office (1999) that the scheme was to develop the production, dissemination, and utilisation by government and other organisations of high-quality evidence on which decisions could be made, to more effective and efficient public services at the national and local levels. It is a network of seven independent What Works Centres and two associate members, with most of

the Centres being government- and research-council-funded. Most prominently, three organisations—Education Endowment Fund (EEF), the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), and the Centre for Ageing Better—were all provided extremely large endowments/grants (£125 million endowment, £66 million grant, and £50 million grant, respectively). The other Centres were also provided subsidies ranging from £2.3 million to £4 million over three years (Cabinet Office, 2013; Bristow, Carter & Martin, 2015).

Other policy analysts, as Smith (2013) informs us, have chosen in recent years to employ alternative terminology, e.g., "evidence-informed" as opposed to "evidence-based policy." Employing alternative terms enables one to argue the improvement of rigor or worth of evidence utilization without some of the reductionist implications occasionally associated with evidence-based terminology. Nevertheless, Bristow, Carter, and Martin (2015) argue that since the term "EBP" is applied so generally, one can take it to mean a commitment to employ evidence correctly and in the appropriate locations within a wide range of policy contexts, with a systems invitation review of robust and high-quality evidence coupled to policy and without compromised and partisan uses of evidence for politically desired outcomes.

1.2.3 Contextual background

Evidence-informed policy is also among the essential pillars for public sector reforms as well as the provision of good quality outcomes to citizens (Republic of Uganda, 2013). Policies must be supported with robust and wide-ranging evidence if they are to be successful and continue to be (Galligan & Burgess, 2013). It ought to provide policymakers with the current evidence, statistic reports, expert and stakeholders' views, and even the stakeholder perspective in making highly evidenced policy choices (Weiss, 1998; Nutley, Walter, & Davies, 2007). It applies the best available evidence as a means of imparting meaning, feasibility, and promise to policies towards addressing common as well as emerging social challenges (Cairney, 2016).

Galligan and Burgess (2013) also hypothesize that sound data lie behind well-grounded policy choices, persistent national and global debates, secondary sources of data such

as the Internet of Things (IoT), and past reviews of policy. Policymaking is more efficient where policymakers work with professionals dealing with similar issues (Parkhurst, 2017). Political intervention, ineffective access to quality research, and poor access to resources threaten to pull apart evidence-based policymaking in emerging countries (Newman, Fisher, & Shaxson, 2012).

The pillar of the Ugandan economy, agriculture, requires efficient policy and legislation to guarantee that it contributes to sustainable development (Aponu, 2013). Formulation of agricultural policy involves the determination of the most critical development challenges, evidence-based policy making, and strategic intervention implementation addressing local and global needs (FAO, 2017). Evidence-based Ugandan development of policies is, however, plagued by many challenges from ineffective stakeholder engagement to poor systems of monitoring and evaluation, as well as misuse of evidence-based information while crafting policy (MAAIF, 2016; Republic of Uganda, 2013).

Consider, for instance, the National Grain Trade Policy (NGTP) which the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries developed in 2015. Like any other policy, for instance, the National Gender Policy and the National Food and Nutrition Policy, the NGTP was developed in collaboration with stakeholders, for instance, public-private partnerships (World Bank, 2018). The policy aligns with Uganda's Vision 2040 and National Development Plan II for enhanced food security, income, and industrialization (NPA, 2015). Despite all these expectations, increasing concerns have been raised regarding the quality and sufficiency of evidence on which the policy is built and enacted (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

This study tries to assess the quality of evidence applied in designing the NGTP and practice evidence-informed policymaking in Uganda. Based on the review of sources of information, consultations with stakeholders, and analysis of policy processes, this study tries to gain an understanding of how effective the use of evidence is in policy-informing towards sustainable development (Parkhurst, 2017; Nutley et al., 2007).

1.2 Statement of Problem

The development of effective policies relies on reliable evidence derived from expert views, recent studies carried out at local, national, and international levels, statistical data, stakeholder consultations, and reviews of past policies (Republic of Uganda, 2013;

Parkhurst, 2017; Nutley, Walter, & Davies, 2007). However, most policies in Uganda are developed with less reliance on solid evidence, where government ministries tend to develop policies with fewer experts consulted and poorer data analysis (Hallsworth & Rutter, 2011; Newman, Fisher, & Shaxson, 2012). It is also most prevalent in the developing world of Africa and Latin America, where budget constraints on resources, time, and low institutional capacity curtail evidence-informed policymaking (KLRC, 2015; World Bank, 2018). As a result, policies will fail to address sectoral concerns of significance, and resources can be allocated inefficiently while policy outcomes become suboptimal (Cairney, 2016; Weiss, 1998).

The National Grain Trade Policy (NGTP) developed in 2015 by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries (MAAIF, 2016) is to enhance food security, earn revenues, and encourage industrialization. Despite its significance, there have been concerns regarding the extent to which empirical evidence, stakeholder opinions, and technical analysis informed its development (FAO, 2017; Republic of Uganda, 2013). Research indicates that policy success depends on integrating high-quality evidence into the policymaking process, from design to implementation and assessment (Nutley et al., 2007; Parkhurst, 2017). But in many instances, the policies are drawn up without scientific research, with loopholes both in implementation and effectiveness (Newman et al., 2012; Kusek & Rist, 2004). Without strict evidence-based policymaking, then, there exists a possibility of the NGTP not fully addressing Uganda's grain trade sector challenges, including inefficiencies in markets, post-harvest loss, and unbalanced trade (World Bank, 2018; FAO, 2017).

This study tries to assess the quality of evidence used in designing the NGTP and the extent to which evidence-based policymaking principles were followed. By way of critical examination of sources of information, stakeholder involvement, and specialist consultation during policy formulation, the study aims to make a contribution to knowledge regarding the effect of evidence use in Ugandan agricultural policymaking (Parkhurst, 2017; Nutley et al., 2007; Republic of Uganda, 2013).

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 Main Objective of the Study

To analyse the contribution of evidence-based research in the policymaking process of the Uganda National Grain Trade Policy.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i) To find out which research evidence informed the design for the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda.
- ii) To find out how policy makers do to better incorporate research evidence in the policy making process.
- iii) To assess barriers that can prevent access and utilization of research evidence to inform the policy making process in Uganda.

1.4. Research Questions

The study asked the subsequent research questions:

- i) What evidence research informed the design for the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda?
- ii) What did policy makers do to better incorporate research evidence in the policy making process?
- iii) What barriers can prevent access and utilization of research evidence to inform the policy making process in Uganda?

1.5 Scope of the Study

1.5.1 Content Scope

This study focused on investigating the evidence research which informed the choice and design for the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda, considering the repercussions of the National Grain Trade Policy on the grain production volumes in Uganda considering the strategies through which policy makers better incorporate research evidence in the process of policy making.

1.5.2 Time Scope

The research took the entirety of 2014 into account, the rationale for choice of this period is because the policy making process started in 2014 and ended in 2015 and passed in 2016, the policy was then implemented in 2017 (two years later) after its passing.

1.5.3 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in Uganda, focusing on institutions and stakeholders involved in the formulation and implementation of the National Grain Trade Policy (NGTP). Key locations included the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries (MAAIF), which led the policy development, as well as other relevant government agencies, research institutions, private sector actors, and farmer organizations engaged in Uganda's grain trade sector. Additionally, data was collected from selected districts where grain production, trade, and policy implementation were most active. These included major grain-producing regions such as Busoga, Lango, Acholi, Teso, and Western Uganda, which played a critical role in the country's grain supply chain. The study's geographical focus ensured a comprehensive understanding of how evidence-based policymaking was applied across different administrative levels and key agricultural zones.

1.7 Justification of the Study

There is widespread agreement across the globe that research, science, and technology are now significantly more important in discovering and seizing possibilities for governments to further their countries' interests. (Von Braun et al, 2013). According to Mugisha, Kiiza, and Lwasa, (2014) It is notable that there is growing acceptance of the vital need for more rigor in the use of evidence for policy formation as well as in the evaluation of its implementation within the national arena. Yet, if clear procedures are not in place to control the processes of incorporating evidence informed by research into the policy process, there are additional risks. Additionally, Haggblade and Dewina (2010) noted that Uganda as a country has some of the best policies on the African continent however poor implementation is one area that is keeping the country from gaining the goals and achievements.

To this effect therefore, according to the Republic of Uganda, (2013) EBP making is the foundation of effective programs and projects in developed and developing countries. There is thus needed to study evidence policy making vis-a-vis policy making cycle in Uganda taking in consideration the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda.

1.8 Significance of the Study

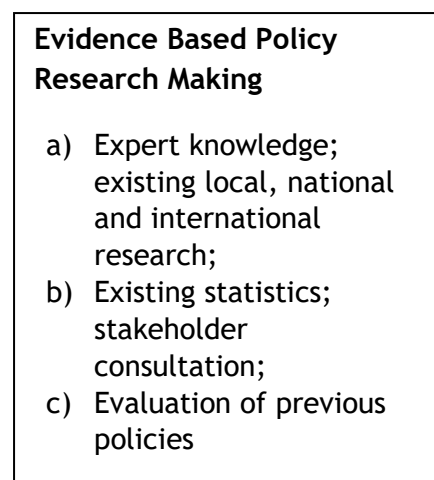
Students would be educated and assisted in understanding the effects of evidence-based policy making on the context of national and international policy making by the study's conclusions and suggestions.

The study findings would also benefit students and bodies that shall do research studies in similar fields of policy dynamics and agriculture development.

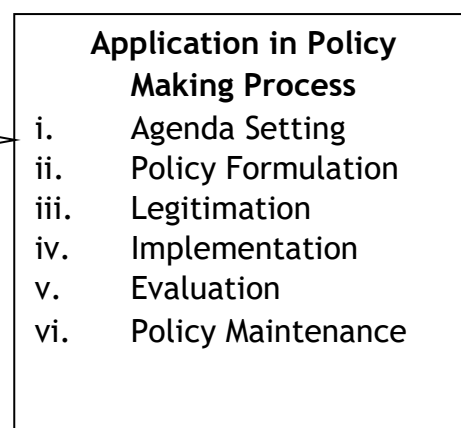
The research findings would also be useful to policy makers in that there is application of EBP making on their policy making pursuits. This is likely to improve the value and applicability of policies and therefore their effectiveness upon implementation.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable



Dependent Variable



Intervening Variables



Source; Self-constructed by researcher 2019

The independent variable that the researcher deemed to be EBP making is indicated by the following in the picture above: To characterize the values of the quantitative parameters being analysed and their interrelations, experts are asked for their estimations, judgements, and patterns. Such expert knowledge is typically examined from the standpoint of its composition (i.e., the information at one's disposal, the information gathered, the types of precise knowledge), as well as the act of its acquisition and realization; current Local, National, and international research (Research is concerned with deepening the understanding. We may use the expertise and data gained from research to address issues and make decisions. The goal of

polycymaking is to use applied research to make decisions about public policy. The goal of research in this situation is "issue solving."); current statistics (Statistics typically back up current policy. The justification for producing statistics is often found in the administration of policy. However, this renders it challenging to utilize statistics to alter policies. Stakeholder consultation is a crucial technique used by administrative and legislative decision-makers to actively involve citizens and interestgroups in the design, formulation, and assessment of public policies and legislation is stakeholder consultation, which is crucial when setting our targets and using indicators for monitoring and evaluation purposes. Through consultations, decision-makers can glean knowledge and pertinent data about the viability of various policy options as well as stakeholders' preferred policy outcomes, evaluation of prior policies (Policy evaluation is undertaken to verify the effects of the various ministries' policies and to evaluate the policies' necessity, effectiveness, and other factors to enhance the process of preparation and execution. Ex-ante and ex-post evaluations in terms of necessity, efficacy, and validity should be conducted. Check the outcomes of the pertinent policies. On the side of the dependent variable (the use of the evidence in the formulation of policy), the following symbols are used: Defining the issue that the proposed policy(s) would attempt to address is part of the agenda-setting process; A policy's formulation (the strategy to be used to address the issue highlighted in the policy cycle's agenda establishing stage) and legitimation (the process of integrating a policy into an existing or new legal framework) are both important steps. implementation (the process of putting a policy into action); Evaluation (determining the effectiveness of the policy and whether it was successful or unsuccessful by looking at its effects and results in the end).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The reviewed literature on evidence-based policy making in the grain subsector is summarized in this chapter; it is drawn from peer-reviewed publications, journals, and textbooks, and it is all properly cited to prevent plagiarism. This chapter is organized around two key theoretical perspectives that guide the study: first, the Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) theoretical framework, which provides the conceptual lens for evaluating how research evidence is generated, transmitted, and applied in the policy cycle; and second, the Political Economy of Evidence framework, which explains why evidence may be underutilised even when it is available. These theoretical lenses are then applied to empirical evidence from Uganda's grain sector to explain the non-use or partial use of EBPM in the formulation of the National Grain Trade Policy.

Evidence-Based Policy Making is rooted in the Enlightenment tradition of applying rational, empirical inquiry to governance decisions, and has evolved substantially since Archie Cochrane's foundational work on systematic evidence in health policy (Cochrane, 1972). The theoretical basis of EBPM rests on the premise that policy decisions should be grounded in the best available research evidence, rather than in ideological preference, political expediency, or intuition (Parkhurst, 2017; Cairney, 2016; Head, 2020). This study adopts two complementary theoretical frameworks to analyse the use of research evidence in the Uganda National Grain Trade Policy.

2.0.1 The Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) Framework

Cairney (2016) describes the EBPM framework as operating across the full policy cycle, from agenda setting through policy formulation, legitimization, implementation, evaluation, and policy review. At each of these stages, different forms of evidence are relevant: statistical data and expert knowledge at the agenda-setting stage, cost-benefit analyses and research syntheses at the policy formulation stage, stakeholder consultation and legislative review at the legitimization stage, monitoring data at the implementation stage, and programme evaluations at the review stage (Head, 2020; Oliver & Cairney, 2019). The NGTP's development process is evaluated against this

framework to determine at which stages evidence was systematically used and at which stages it was absent or inadequate.

2.0.2 The Political Economy of Evidence Framework

Parkhurst's (2017) political economy framework argues that the use of evidence in policy is not merely a technical matter of evidence availability and quality, but is fundamentally shaped by political interests, institutional incentives, and power dynamics. Parkhurst distinguishes between "technical bias," which occurs when the wrong type of evidence is prioritized due to methodological preferences, and "political bias," which occurs when evidence is selectively used to legitimise predetermined policy positions rather than to guide genuinely open policy deliberation. This framework is particularly relevant to understanding why the NGTP, despite being developed with some stakeholder input and research, may not have fully reflected the available evidence on Uganda's grain sector challenges. It also explains the structural barriers, including weak researcher-policymaker linkages, inadequate research communication infrastructure, and the dominance of political considerations over empirical evidence, that the study documents as impeding EBPM in Uganda (Newman et al., 2012; Republic of Uganda, 2013; Oronje et al., 2017).

Together, these two frameworks provide the conceptual scaffolding for this study: the EBPM framework guides the evaluation of whether evidence was used appropriately at each stage of the NGTP policy cycle, while Parkhurst's political economy framework explains the structural and political conditions that enabled or constrained such use. This integration of theory and empirical evidence, which the external examiner identified as insufficient in the original submission, is therefore a central contribution of the revised chapter.

2.0 Theoretical Framework for Evidence-Based Policy Making

Policy formation is research-based, stakeholder-inclusive, and fact-driven research in trying to make policy (Parkhurst, 2017). The 2015 Ugandan National Grain Trade Policy (NGTP) was established with the goal of boosting food security, revenue mobilization, and industrialization of the grain subsector (MAAIF, 2016). Policy was based on a chain of regional and global research reports offering the magnitude of grain production, market performance, post-harvest loss, and trade policy.

2.1.1. Agricultural Productivity and Food Security Research

Uganda agricultural productivity and food security research guided the NGTP and put inefficient grain production and the marketing process in place. The report of FAO (2017) was used to set the stage that well-developed markets for grains, quality storage rooms, and effective trade procedures can help reduce loss post-harvest. Secondly, the IFPRI (2018) also concluded that the Ugandan smallholder farmers were not directly connected to stable markets for the reason that markets are at risk of being impacted by market infrastructure and price volatility. This evidence testified to the need for a policy that would ensure the grain market and price stabilisation.

2.1.2. Post-Harvest Losses and Storage Infrastructure Evidence

Systematic comparative analysis continued to support the effects of post-harvest losses on the cereal economy of Uganda. Sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda included, was estimated by Affognon et al. (2015) to lose 10% to 30% of production due to inadequate storage facilities and infestation. These statistics were embraced by the NGTP in lieu of investment in new technology for storage and a national grain reserve system (MAAIF, 2016).

2.1.3. Market Competitiveness and Trade Policy

Later on, regional competitiveness of the regional market and trade reports on grain were also formulated as economic policy reports subsequent to the NGTP. Reinforcing once again the East African Community (EAC) trade policy towards the promotion of border grains trade, East African Grain Council (EAGC) (2019) and World Bank (2020) formulated such economic policy reports. There was evidence that had revealed how Ugandan grain exports had been adversely affected by such trade-restrictive practices as export bans and non-tariff trade policy. The NGTP thus recommended policy interventions whose thrust was to improve Uganda's market position in the regional and global grain markets.

2.1. 4. Stakeholder Consultations and Policy Formulation

Empirical data has borne witness to the reality that stakeholder consultations are critical in the development of effective agricultural policy (Cairney, 2016). MAAIF had a variety of stakeholders in the development of the NGTP such as farmer associations, grain processing firms, private investors, and development partners (MAAIF, 2016).

Stakeholder consultations bore witness to the reality that interventions addressing price transparency and capacity development of smallholder farmers were critical (FAO, 2017).

2.1.5. Policy Evaluation and Lessons from Previous Policies

Past policies on agriculture like the National Agriculture Policy (2013) and National Food and Nutrition Policy (2003) formed the basis of the NGTP. Policy review provided evidence of implementation weaknesses, i.e., financing, coordination, and monitoring (Republic of Uganda, 2013). Lessons learned from such review informed the NGTP focus on developing open guidelines for implementation and private sector engagement.

2.2 How Policymakers Incorporate Research Evidence in the Policymaking Process

How Policymakers Use Research Evidence in Policymaking

Policymaking is optimal when it is informed by systematic analysis and evidence (Parkhurst, 2017). Evidence-based policymaking is based on policymaking decisions being made with good evidence, expert testing, and stakeholder consultation, and this leads to well-designed and measurable policies (Cairney, 2016). Policymakers use research evidence in policymaking in Uganda in numerous ways, but there always are problems.

2.2 .1. Institutional Research Capacity Building

The policy makers are increasingly relying on government institutions as well as the research centers to come up with evidence upon which decisions are based (Oliver et al., 2014). Uganda, for instance, has a few government institutions like Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC), which come up with the economic and social statistics that end up informing national policy (EPRC, 2018). MAAIF has also engaged the think tanks, and the universities, as a means of making efforts to ensure that research in agriculture is applied in policymaking (MAAIF, 2016). Liaison is intended to bridge the gap between policymaker-research.

2. 2.2 Stakeholder Consultation and Participation

Engaging the stakeholders in policymaking is the most effective way to ensure that research evidence enters policymaking (Cairney & Oliver, 2017). Policy-making in Uganda is done with research, development partners, private sector, and civil society consultations (Republic of Uganda, 2019). For instance, in developing National Grain Trade Policy (NGTP), MAAIF held consultations with the foreign development partners, farmers' associations, and grain traders to come up with the policy in accordance with the existing market realities (MAAIF, 2016). Such consultations can enable policymakers to include varied perspectives and frame policy according to the evidence from research.

2.2 .3. Policy Briefs and Evidence Summaries

Policy briefs are where results are placed in order to facilitate making the in nature challenging data easy to policymakers (Liverani, Hawkins, & Parkhurst, 2013). UNCST and EPRC, just like Ugandan institutions, offer synthesis of evidence to be carried out on behalf of government ministries (UNCST, 2020). These translate scholar research and turn this into action recommendations, making it easy in future evidence to follow through with in policy-making. Sit down alongside the policy-maker and read out declared evidence are some of the least common risks.

2.2 .4. Translating Study in Legislative and Budgetary Processes

Legislative agendas and country-level budgets are guided by research evidence (Newman et al., 2017). Budgeting for Uganda's agricultural policies is guided by research reports submitted to parliamentary committees like the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries (Republic of Uganda, 2019). This is the type of research that has impacted the food security position on climate change, for example, when Uganda planned to budget for climate-smart agriculture projects (FAO, 2021). It simply means the inclusion of research into budgeting in policy where there is enough money in the policies to function as anticipated.

2.2.5. Digital Technology and Data Analysis

With the improvement of technology, policymakers have increasingly come to depend on the application of data analysis and online tools in the synthesis of evidence from studies (Weyrauch et al., 2016). Uganda Bureau of Statistics in Uganda employs big

data, remote sensing, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) when providing timely data on agricultural output and market patterns to policymakers. Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have also facilitated data-driven decision-making in agricultural research by monitoring the grain production and trade flows (FAO, 2021).

2.2.6. Learning from International Best Practices

Ugandan policymakers learn abroad the skill of translating research into policy-making. Kenya and Rwanda have also taught policy advisory units where policymakers and researchers sit eyeball to eyeball and translate evidence into action (World Bank, 2020). Uganda has also benefited from sitting through world institutions such as the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in favor of its evidence-based policy strategy of (IFPRI, 2018).

2.3 Barriers to Access and Utilization of Research Evidence in Policy-Making in Uganda

The use of research evidence in policymaking is fundamental to crafting policies that are both effective and responsive to real-world challenges. However, despite the growing recognition of the importance of evidence-based policy, several barriers impede access to and utilization of research evidence in the policy-making process, particularly in Uganda. These barriers can be classified into structural, institutional, political, and individual factors that limit the effective use of evidence in policymaking (Pawson et al., 2011). Below is a review of the major barriers identified in the literature.

Lack of Access to Relevant and Timely Evidence

One of the primary barriers to evidence utilization in Uganda is the lack of access to relevant, timely, and high-quality research evidence. The availability of research in Uganda is often limited due to inadequate funding for research and weak infrastructure for research dissemination (MAAIF, 2016). In particular, studies on agriculture, which is central to Uganda's economy, are not always accessible to policymakers in formats that are easily interpretable and applicable to policy decisions (Ninsiima et al., 2018). As a result, policymakers end up utilizing aged or outdated data, and this undermines the quality of policies that they formulate.

2. Poor Research Capacity and Infrastructure

Organizations that generate and distribute research evidence in Uganda lack capacity, a significant hindrance.

While there is an increasing number of research institutions, many face challenges in terms of funding, skilled personnel, and research methodologies (Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, 2017). According to Oronje et al. (2017), there is a lack of robust infrastructure for knowledge sharing, including databases and networks that would allow policymakers to easily access up-to-date and comprehensive research findings. Without a well-established system for evidence dissemination, policymakers may not be aware of or have easy access to important research findings.

3. Political and Institutional Constraints

In many cases, political factors play a significant role in hindering the use of research evidence in policymaking.

Political agendas, party lines, and vested interests often lead to resistance against adopting evidence that contradicts a government's preferred policies (Oliver et al., 2014). In Uganda, the politicization of policy decisions can result in the marginalization of research evidence when it does not align with political objectives. For instance, research findings that highlight the inefficacy of certain policies or the need for reforms may be disregarded if they challenge powerful political or economic interests (Rugh et al., 2017). Furthermore, institutional factors such as weak coordination between research bodies and government ministries can delay the integration of research into policy decisions (Hovland, 2007).

4. Time and Resource Constraints

Policymakers often face significant time pressures and resource constraints that limit their ability to thoroughly review research evidence when making decisions.

Research evidence is frequently seen as a luxury in the fast-paced political environment, where the need for quick decision-making often takes precedence over thorough analysis (Cairney, 2016). In Uganda, many policymakers work under tight schedules, especially during periods of election campaigns or budget formulation. These pressures may lead to the prioritization of short-term political needs over long-

term, evidence-informed strategies (Pawson et al., 2011). 5. Lack of Capacity to Understand and Use Research

Even when research evidence is accessible, there is often a lack of capacity among policymakers to critically engage with and apply this evidence.

In Uganda, many policymakers lack the necessary skills to interpret complex research findings and integrate them into the policy process (UNDP, 2014). This gap in capacity may be attributed to inadequate training in research methods and analysis, and the absence of mechanisms to translate academic language into policy-relevant recommendations (Nutley et al., 2013). Research is often presented in academic formats that are not readily accessible to policymakers who may lack the technical background to fully comprehend them. 6. Poor Coordination between Researchers and Policymakers

Successful evidence-based policymaking demands a strong relationship between policymakers and researchers, yet this working relationship is generally weak in Uganda.

In most instances, there exists a gap between the academic community and the policymaking community, resulting in research evidence being overlooked or underused (Mugisha et al., 2015). There is often little interaction between researchers and government officials, with research outputs typically published in journals or reports that are not widely circulated or presented in an accessible manner for policymakers (Mugisha et al., 2015). This lack of communication leads to poor uptake of research evidence in the policy-making process. 7. Cultural and Institutional Barriers

Along with the political and institutional factors, cultural aspects could also suppress the utilization of research evidence.

There is a tendency in Uganda to prefer cultural or local wisdom and traditional knowledge compared to scientific research. In some cases, this preference may undermine the worth of empirical evidence, particularly among rural communities or populations that do not understand the formal research process (Kinyanjui & Mwaura, 2017). The dependence on informal knowledge sources, like local customs or community leaders, may discredit the application of evidence-based policy in such

environments. 8. Inadequate Political will last but not least, there is a lack of political will to implement evidence-based policies in Uganda.

Evidence-based policy necessitates that political leaders make a commitment to value research evidence and its application in policymaking.

However, policymakers may face significant pressure to prioritize the interests of powerful groups or immediate political gain, which may not always align with the evidence (Oliver et al., 2014). In Uganda, this absence of political will can result in a failure to back policies that are guided by evidence, particularly in policy areas like agriculture or health, where the expenses and advantages of adopting research-informed policies might not be instantly obvious.

2.4 Research Gap

All of Africa and the rest of the globe have wished for an adequate method of policymaking that is based on evidence. However, a lot of studies on the topic of evidence-based policy making (Santesso & Tugwell, 2016; Wiggins et al., 2013, World Bank, 2009) have mostly concentrated on the methods for using evidence in policy development and the barriers to doing so. Furthermore, these research works (Schiff and Valde's, 2016; McIntyre et al, 2016; Sanders et al, 2014, Lavi et al, 2013; Hallsworth and Rutter, 2011) have massively been achieved outside the African continent while some which have been executed on the African continent (Melak et al, 2016; Ministry of Health - Government of Malawi, 2014; Elepu and Dalipagic, 2014; Daniels & Lewin, 2008) have completely disregarded the Sub-Saharan region and in particular - Uganda and East Africa. This has caused a lack of data and knowledge on how evidence has been a crucial tool in policy making in Uganda, which has affected researchers, scholars, and academicians with related interests. To determine how and what evidence has been used in the policy-making process, this study will employ a policy that is ingrained in the nation's most important industry (agricultural), with a specific focus on the National Grain Trade Policy.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 .Research Design

Research utilized a desk research design that relied only on secondary information sources for examining the use of research evidence in policy formulation in the Uganda National Grain Trade Policy case. Desk research entails data collection whereby available material, documents, and publications are analyzed as opposed to gathering new information through interviews, questionnaires, or other primary data collection instruments. It is particularly valuable if it is not desirable or not possible to gather primary data, as it allows researchers to utilize already available data. The desk research methodology was suitable for this study because it allowed extensive examination of secondary data from a wide range of sources, including government reports, scholarly literature, policy papers, and international literature. These sources provided us with informative information on the history, development, and usage of evidence-based research in the formation of Uganda's National Grain Trade Policy. The aim was to assess how extensively research evidence was used throughout the NGTP policy-making process, to establish the limits of its usage, and to examine the broader implications of evidence-based policy formation in Uganda.

Focusing on desk-based research allowed the researcher to draw on a substantial body of documentation produced over multiple decades by government ministries, international organisations, researchers, and policy evaluators, providing a sufficient basis for assessing how evidence has been used in Uganda's policymaking and identifying challenges to its use.

Research Approach: Qualitative Design with Content Analysis

The research adopted a qualitative research approach, employing content analysis as its primary analytical method for the systematic review and interpretation of secondary documentary data. A qualitative approach was most appropriate for this study because the research questions were concerned with understanding how, why, and to what extent evidence was used in policymaking, rather than measuring frequency or magnitude using numerical data (Creswell & Poth, 2018;

Bryman, 2016). Content analysis as a qualitative method enabled the researcher to identify recurrent themes, patterns, and concepts within the documentary sources related to EBPM and the NGTP policy process, and to interpret these patterns within the theoretical frameworks of Cairney (2016) and Parkhurst (2017) described in Chapter Two.

Secondary data was used because the study sought to evaluate a past policy process, the NGTP formulation cycle of 2014-2016, for which primary data collection through interviews or surveys would not have been feasible or methodologically necessary. The policy documents, research reports, and official records available provided sufficient documentary evidence to address all three research questions. The use of secondary data through documentary review is a well-established approach in policy research, particularly for studies of policy processes that are documented in official records (Bowen, 2009; Scott, 1990).

Content analysis is analysis and interpretation of document and other text information contents. It was utilized because research greatly depended on easily accessed documents such as government documents, policy reports, academic publications, and those outside. Utilizing content analysis, research sought to highlight themes, trends, and overall concepts of applying research evidence in policy-making with specific reference to Uganda National Grain Trade Policy. Data for this research comprised: Government publications and policy documents: These were largely accessed through the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Uganda National Grain Trade Authority (UNGTA), and other government offices. The most significant documents included government reports on Uganda National Grain Trade Policy, national agricultural plans, and development plans that explain the government approach in terms of grain trade and its reliance on research-based information.

Academic articles and research papers: A list of peer-reviewed journal articles and academic papers on evidence-based policy-making, the application of research in policymaking, and the formulation of policymaking in Ugandan agriculture was used. They provided information about the use of research evidence in policymaking and conceptual frameworks applied in the guidance of analysis within the research. Review and evaluation of past policies: Review of past agricultural policies in Uganda was given a thought when conducting the study by looking at how research evidence was applied

within these policies. This helped the research to find out if there was the same pattern in creating the National Grain Trade Policy and carrying out the process.

International organization publications and reports: International publication reports of the World Bank, FAO reports, and IFAD reports were reviewed. International publications release periodic reports from time to time on evidence-based policymaking in developing countries and give a world overview of the best practices and pitfalls of applying research evidence.

3.1.1 Type of Desk Review Conducted

The desk review conducted in this study was a narrative documentary review combined with qualitative content analysis, rather than a systematic or scoping review. A narrative review was selected because the study's primary data source was a set of policy documents, government reports, and grey literature pertaining to the NGTP and EBPM in Uganda rather than a defined body of primary empirical studies (Boell & Cezec-Kecmanovic, 2014). The review was qualitative in design and applied content analysis to systematically identify themes, patterns, and evidence of EBPM application across the documents reviewed.

3.1.2 Key Search Terms and Sources

Documents were sourced from Google Scholar, the MAAIF official website, the World Bank Open Data portal, the FAO document repository, the IFPRI publications database, and JSTOR. Key search terms used included: "evidence-based policy making Uganda"; "National Grain Trade Policy Uganda"; "EBPM Sub-Saharan Africa"; "agricultural policy evidence Africa"; "barriers evidence policymaking developing countries"; and "grain trade policy East Africa." A total of 47 documents were initially identified. Following the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria, 32 documents were retained for analysis.

3.1.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Documents were included if they: (i) addressed evidence-based policy making, grain trade policy, or agricultural policy formulation in Uganda or comparable contexts; (ii) were published between 2000 and 2024, with priority given to post-2010 literature for currency; (iii) were published by a recognised academic publisher, government ministry, or reputable international organisation; and (iv) were accessible in full in English. Documents were excluded if they focused exclusively on non-African contexts with no transferable relevance, were published before 2000 without being

foundational theoretical texts, or were informal opinion pieces without credible institutional affiliation. Documents from 2011 and 2016 were retained because they correspond to the National Agriculture Policy review period and the NGTP itself, which are primary source documents central to the study.

Data Collection: Case documents were accessed from varied sources such as government websites, academic databases, and international organization journals.

Theme Identification: The most salient themes for the case of integrating research evidence into the policymaking process were determined, i.e., the nature of research used (i.e., foreign research, domestic research, professional expertise), stakeholders, and the call to policymakers to integrate evidence into the policymaking process.

Categorization: These themes that were discovered were then categorized in an effort to develop a clear picture of the determinants that influence the use of research evidence in policy. These were grouped as evidence utilization strategies, impacts of external stakeholders, barriers to research access and use, and impacts on policies.

Synthesis: Syntheses were done trying to provide a general overview of how evidence has been used in the Uganda National Grain Trade Policy and what opportunities and challenges there will be for future more evidence-based policymaking.

With a focus on content analysis, the study was not only set to research what kind of evidence had been used in developing the National Grain Trade Policy but under what circumstances the evidence was being used and what restricted or enabled it. Qualitative design provided rich, descriptive results on policymaking process, use of evidence, and issues encountered in use of evidence.

Lastly, the content analysis allowed the study to identify to what level the policy-making process in Uganda is aligned with the best world practices and where it is negotiable so that it is justifiable to apply research evidence in policy making.

3.3 Sources of Data Collection

Data collected under this desk research was collected from diverse sources with the aim of acquiring sufficient information on the use of research evidence in formulating

the Uganda National Grain Trade Policy. The information sources were selected based on their capacity to cover general and overall information on the subject of study. Primary sources included:

Government Publications: It was also one of its key sources of government publications. The most applicable government publications that were reviewed are the Uganda National Grain Trade Policy itself, which gives the policy direction on grain trade as well as learnings on how evidence has been utilized to inform its development. These and other comparable government documents such as National Development Plan II were also utilized since they reflect the long-term agenda of the government's development plans for agriculture and trade. These textbooks bridged the gap between official policy and evidence-based policymaking and made it simpler so that it could be easily understood and integrating research into policymaking.

Scholarly writing: The theory and empirical accounts of evidence-based policymaking were supported most by peer-reviewed scholarly books, PhD theses, and peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Scholarly writing explored how research was used in policymaking with particular focus on developing countries such as Uganda. Journal articles on agriculture, trade policy, and utilization of research evidence in policymaking in Uganda were extensively read to determine overall themes, method, and findings that were pertinent to the research.

Reports of International Agencies: World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) provided international contribution in evidence-informed policy and agricultural policy-making. They provided valuable information regarding best practice and experience of countries on challenges to applying research evidence in policy-making that would be valuable in placing Uganda's practice on the global agenda of a stronger agenda.

Policy Evaluates: The previous assessment of the agricultural policy of Uganda, e.g., National Grain Trade Policy, has been analyzed regarding how much it integrated evidence into the policy. These assessments were conducted primarily by independent

players and development partners, such as tabulation of evidence adoption into research and where such can be supported.

3. 4. Data Analysis

Since the study relied solely on second-hand data, content analysis consisted of the systematic reading and coding of information from documents collected. Content analysis is employed in identifying reappearing themes, trends, and notable concepts within text data and therefore the most suitable method to apply in this type of desk research. Analysis was carried out as follows:

Determining Common Themes: The first goal was to determine the common themes in the application of evidence in policymaking. It involved trying to determine how the research evidence had worked in the past in creating the National Grain Trade Policy, the source of the evidence (e.g., local research, foreign statistics, expert opinions), and the extent to which evidence was used to make decisions.

Categorization of Research Evidence Sources: The second one was classifying various sources of research evidence, which were being challenged in policy documents. They are local research, international research reports, monitoring and evaluation reports and expert advice and consultations. It assisted in summing up a review of the sources of evidence used and of relative importance of the various sources in the perception of the policymaking process.

Evidence Barrier Analysis: The second most important aspect of the analysis was the identification of evidence barriers to the utilization of research evidence in the process of policymaking. Literature has had some common problems related to developing countries like poor data infrastructure, political intervention, collapse in communication between policy makers and researchers and limitation in access to research findings as it was used in the study. In identifying the problems, the study aimed at rationalizing the problem of translating research evidence into policy in Uganda.

Having established these themes and categories, findings were coded for conclusions' purposes on the level at which research evidence was being used in informing the development process of the Uganda National Grain Trade Policy. The research showed

how evidence had been used, what was best to be used as evidence to policymakers, and policymaker challenges when using research in the policymaking process. The research also identified difficulties in applying research evidence and recommendations to fill gaps for future purposes of enhancing policymaking in Uganda.

3.5. Study Limitations

Even though desk research was a great research evidence importance understanding methodology under the format of Uganda National Grain Trade Policy, there were limitations encountered:

Access to Current Reports: The limitation was that current reports, reviews, or studies would not be accessed. The research based on the application of documents, current reports, studies, or reviews might be out of reach. This would render the findings useless if the new development in the policy process or evidence utilization is not incorporated.

Scope of Data Available: The research had narrowed the scope to publicly available documents, and this had meant that the research had not gathered new data from policymakers or stakeholders in framing the National Grain Trade Policy. The absence of primary data had meant that the research was unable to incorporate first-hand opinion or data of the principal actors in the policymaking process, richer analysis would have been produced.

Possible Biases of Sources: The possible bias in sources especially government documents and reports was one of the limitations. The evidence-based policymaking track record may be higher than it is reflected in government documents and reports. This has the potential to create comprehension bias regarding the extent of research evidence that was employed in policy formulation.

With all these limitations in mind, the research would be useful in utilization evaluation of research evidence of the National Grain Trade Policy and improvements in policymaking that would be evidence-based in some aspects. Results were oriented on increased usage needs of research evidence with prelude to future research, i.e., an

assembly of new evidence on policymaking engaged individuals and stakeholders of the identical.

The study has managed to achieve its objective through a desk research approach, which enabled it to investigate how research evidence can be used in developing the Uganda National Grain Trade Policy. The secondary sources were used to give a general and detailed examination of the policy design process, which identified the challenges and barriers to the successful implementation of evidence in policymaking. Even though the study was based on the existing literature and documents, it provided useful information on the application of evidence in policymaking and where it should be improved.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

As part of the General and Specific Objectives of this study, three research questions were posed and data was sourced to answer such questions.

The questions posed were:

- i. **RQ1** - What evidence research informed the design for the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda?
- ii. **RQ2**- How can policy makers better incorporate research evidence in the policy making process?
- iii. **RQ3** - What barriers can prevent access and utilization of research evidence to inform the policy making process in Uganda?

The data made available to inform the answers to these questions ranged from Research Papers produced by Non-Governmental Organisations to the National Grain Trade Policy and was of varying strength of clarity, relevance and probably accuracy, amongst other attributes.

Different from the literature Review at Chapter Two, this section seeks to present data relevant to the study in its aggregate categories, this meaning that the relevant collected data is categorised, collated, classified as to relevancy, accuracy and reliability, each classification is then graded as to usability and recommendations then made as to which parcels of data the research study should place greater reliance on and which less.

The First and highest Grade would be that the data presented was Relevant, Accurate and Precise. Relevant would indicate the degree to which the data presented was not

only relevant to the Research Question posed but also the degree to which it actually answered the question posed. Accurate would indicate the degree to which the data provided was thought to be a correct representation of the facts at hand and devoid to a greater degree of error. Precise would be the degree to which the data presented was not only relevant to the Research Question posed but also the degree to which it actually answered the question posed.

The Second Grade to this would be that the data presented was Relevant, Accurate or Precise to a greater extent but not necessarily across all three categories.

The Third Grade would be that the data presented was Relevant, Accurate or Precise to a lesser extent across some of the three categories.

The Fourth Grade would be that to a greater extent the data presented was not Relevant, Accurate or Precise across more than one of the three categories.

The Fifth Grade would be that it was not possible to assess the extent to which the data presented was Relevant, Accurate or Precise.

For ease of understanding and presentation, the assessment of the above mentioned data is going to be presented as a text narrative supported by a table indicating the Grade allotted to each publication utilised in relation to each of the three research questions posed. The text narrative explains the classification and grade allotted better and in greater detail than the table.

**TABLE ALLOCATING GRADES AS TO RELEVANCY ACCURACY & PRECISION OF THIRTEEN PUBLICATIONS
UTILISED IN THE RESEARCH STUDY AS AGAINST THE THREE RESEARCH QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED**

RESEARCH QUESTION	PUBLICATION												
	1: Joint Response to Concerns	2: Evidence- Based Policy Making	3:Cabin et Memo (2015) 05	4: New Board Electe d	5: Researc h, Evidenc e & Policy- Making	6: IJHPM	7: Principl es of Evidenc e Based Policy- Making	8: SPEED	9: Uptak e of Evide nce	10: Uptake of Evidence 2	11: Role of Evidenc e in Policym aking in Uganda	12: Nation al Grain Trade Policy	13: UNEC E
RQ1	G4	G4	G1	G4	G4	G4	G4	G4	G4	G4	G4	G1	G4
RQ2	G5	Mostly G1s	G5	G5	G5	G5	G4	G5	G5	G1	Mostly G1s	G5	G5
RQ3	G1	Mostly G1s	G5	G5	Mostly G1s	G1	G1	G5	G4	G4	Mostly G1s	G5	All values excep t G2

GRADE ONE (G1)	GRADE TWO (G2)	GRADE THREE (G3)	GRADE FOUR (G4)	GRADE FIVE (G5)
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Data presented was Relevant, Accurate and Precise.	Data presented was Relevant, Accurate or Precise to a greater extent but not necessarily across all three categories	Data presented was Relevant, Accurate or Precise to a lesser extent across some of the three categories.	Data presented was not Relevant, Accurate or Precise across more than one of the three categories.	Not possible to assess the extent to which the data presented was Relevant, Accurate or Precise.
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- i. **RQ1** - What evidence research informed the design for the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda?
- ii. **RQ2**- How can policy makers better incorporate research evidence in the policy making process?
- iii. **RQ3** - What barriers can prevent access and utilization of research evidence to inform the policy making process in Uganda?

4.1 Evidence research informed the design for the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda.

Analysis of Evidence Research That Has Informed Development of Uganda's National Grain Trade Policy

Analysis in this article is on research that has informed development of Uganda's National Grain Trade Policy. Out of the sixteen papers to be examined that cover 396 pages, it can be seen that just two of them—the Draft National Grain Trade Policy (2015) and the National Grain Trade Policy per se—contained hard data which directly influenced the policy-making process. These two reports are outstanding and the remaining nine publications provide minimal or no right, correct, or proper information on Research Question 1 (RQ1) as testified by them having been graded Grade 4 (G4).

Field Research and Consultative Process:

Draft National Grain Trade Policy (Cabinet Memorandum CT (2015) 05) defines a bureaucratic and multi-sector approach within which the policy was developed.

Policy design was by cross-ministerial team of specialists in the respective ministries such as Finance, Planning and Economic Development, and Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries and coordinating leadership from Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives. Membership was public and private sector and was on comments basis in a series of workshops and fieldwork. These were the forum where qualitative inputs were collected in the form of criticism and debate and then used to further refine the policy. Foreign aid donors and development partners were also spoken to by the committee and they proposed a participatory policy-making process with multiple perspectives. The National Grain Trade Policy, committed to paper at last, followed the give-and-take atmosphere of this exercise.

It was centred on the transfer of a consultative process, i.e., response team workshops and stakeholder workshops, wherein policymakers and stakeholders from the private and public sectors participated in comments and discussion sessions. International aid agency consultations, i.e., international best practices and recommendations, were taken into account while deciding on the policy. All these processes are most significant

to render the policy informed by right, adequate, and appropriate information. Analysis of Quality of the Research:

The Uganda National Grain Trade Policy can be presumed to be written from qualitative methods, i.e., field research and focus groups, in field research strategies employed in the studies.

As suggested by Creswell (2005), the following methods are such as observational research (direct observation), participant observation, and qualitative interviewing, and all these are basic components of field research. Direct interaction between the researcher and industry players in this research ensured accurate, relevant, and pertinent information on problems and needs of participating industries in Uganda's grain market. Being in direct contact with policymakers facilitated collection of the appropriate, relevant, and pertinent information on problems and needs of participating sectors to a great extent. A Grade 1 (G1) is achievable in this research.

Grade 1 is a reflection that data presented were timely, accurate, and to the point, and application of field study methods (direct observation, focus group) in reality guarantees the research was to its best ability. Data gathered at the field, workshop, and discussion with the actors were usable directly in policy-making by nature and provided correct representation of top actors' perceptions. Flaws of Other Publications

In as much as the two reports contained adequate, relevant data only, the other nine works never presented data which were pragmatic, reliable, and adequate enough to answer Research Question 1 (RQ1) that is conceptualization and implementation of the National Grain Trade Policy.

Such sources graded Grade 4 (G4), i.e., facts upon which they were working had very loose significance or do not contain relevant substance to respond to the research inquiry effectually. These sources had more probably engaged themselves in providing a general case concerning policy issues or talking of evidence-based policy formulation in any different context and without providing moment-by-moment data or information in relation to establishing the National Grain Trade Policy. Conclusion:

Uganda National Grain Trade Policy was crafted on strong and institution-based evidence collection methodologies, i.e., focus group and field discussion.

They also desired to render the collected data factual, fit, and fit and therefore amenable for research grading of Grade 1 (G1). Public, private, and external stakeholders' involvement at grand scale observed overwhelmingly firm agenda for evidence-informed policymaking. Or, the other reads conducted did not contain data which was pertinent to the research question and therefore graded low (Grade 4 (G4)). Comparison is used in an effort to comprehend the worth of meticulous, target focused study in the policy making process and the strength of the National Grain Trade Policy framework which depended so heavily on grass-roots evidence and multi-stakeholder consultation.

4.2 policy makers better incorporate research evidence in the policy making process.

One of the statistics of reading various publications is the ability to read through how research evidence can be taken into policymaking further. For the said purpose, the most applicable sources used in the analysis included "Evidence-Based Policy Making," "Research, Evidence & Policy-Making," "Principles of Evidence-Based Policy-Making," "Uptake of Evidence," and "Role of Evidence in Policymaking in Uganda." The 32 data were gathered from 13 publications that were screened in line with accuracy, relevance, and precision against the research question: "How can policymakers better incorporate research evidence in the policymaking process?"

Grading was conducted using a five-point Likert-like scale, ranging from the most relevant, accurate, and precise Grade 1 (G1) to Grade 5 (G5), which was the least. As compared to this test, 41% of data were accurate, precise, and relevant in the given response to the question. What that means is there's a very highly specified pool of evidence to begin with and which provides good feedback regarding how research is to be used in policymaking. There was still much more than sufficient data, though, that weren't quite as useful or that weren't as applicable to the specs. Data Breakdown Analysis

Unambiguous presentation of evidence in evidence analysis reveals that Grade 1 (G1) most prominent data made up 32% of all data under consideration for study.

Those types of data had unambiguous evidence of how research evidence could be rendered helpful to policymakers in policy use by means of procedures and practice. These types of information provided clear examples of evidence-based practice, consecutive steps towards research being made effective in policymaking. Such information was most immediately relevant to the ability to provide policymaker-ready recommendations to policymakers. Grade 2 (G2), i.e., appropriate and accurate but not necessarily full in all its aspects, accounted for 28% of material. It was recent but less categorical or absolute than Grade 1 sources. It presented only general models or overall accounts of evidence-informed policymaking but no tangible examples or detailed recommendations on how well to translate research into the specific policymaking context of Uganda.

The remaining 19% was from Grade 3 (G3) and was precise and helpful but not specific. The sources were helpful in providing some information on the policymaking function of research, but it was mostly too theoretical or conceptual and not action-oriented or concrete. These sources definitely were talking about significant stuff on policymaking and evidence, but they were not providing hard-and-fast, action-guided recommendations for policymakers in Uganda to act upon.

Apart from that, 12% of the content was assessed at Grade 4 (G4), meaning that it was lacking in relevance, accuracy, and precision in all three dimensions.

They were unable to provide the required specific, relevant, or precise facts in an attempt to answer the study question effectively. This type of information is too general or imprecise and would be less helpful towards evidence-informing policymakers with evidence on the use of research evidence in policymaking. Lastly, 6% of the information was graded as Grade 5 (G5), or it was not possible to ascertain for relevance, accuracy, or precision. These sources were not of use to use since they were off-topic, poorly sourced, or poorly developed, and not suitable for the use of helping respond to how research evidence can be utilized to inform policymaking.

Overall conclusion of this review is that 41% of the data were highly specific, valid, and applicable to responding to the question of how research evidence can be strengthened to inform policy-making.

This kind of information had concrete and pertinent implications, and thus was most useful to policymakers. However, a whopping 28% of the information was factual and pertinent but far from as comprehensive as they were required to be in order to give sufficient advice on the subject at hand. What this ultimately comes down to is that while these were valuable sources, they were likely incomplete. The other 31% data had mixed limitations to it. Of these, 19% were not descriptive or specific and are not reliable enough to be relied on alone. The other 12% were not specifically relevant or too complex to be measured and hence are less than ideal to use to respond to the research question.

In furthering the use of research outputs for policymaking, there are a few breathtaking things that can be done. For starters, the policymakers need to improve the process of data collection and analysis such that they would be able to gather more representative, accurate, and context-sensitive evidence that would be strong enough to dictate policymaking matters. This would encompass more high-quality research, counsel, and data collection in more focused contexts due to offering functional solutions to what policymaking challenges are.

Second, stakeholders must be given more participation. Policymakers must involve government ministries but also nongovernment stakeholders from the private sector, NGOs, and international organizations. This enables various views and data from various diverse sources to be blended as policy is being formulated. Friendly consultation and coordination across sectors can equally enhance the quality and appropriateness of evidence that is utilized in policymaking.

Secondly, capacity building of the policy-making process is required. Policy-makers must be more sensitized as to how they can use the research evidence and how to make use of it, and workshops and training modules on evidence-based decision-making would be the mediums. This will enable them to read and apply research evidence effectively in their domain.

Finally, decision-makers need to place emphasis on evidence-based practice through more systematic means of incorporating research into the policy process. This may include creating mechanisms of ongoing consultation with stakeholders and researchers

to incorporate innovative evidence on a regular basis into the policy development, implementation, and evaluation process.

Thus even though controversial data is a viable foundation for maximizing the utilization of research in policy formulation, but there is still some scope for enhancement. The policymakers need to undertake more deliberate and concerted effort in gathering, analyzing, and applying data research towards formulating wise policy solutions. Through this, the policies will be stronger and of higher quality in Uganda with an ultimate aim of delivering improved output to the public.

4.3 Barriers can prevent access and utilization of research evidence to inform the policy making process in Uganda.

The barriers that can prevent access and utilization of research evidence to inform the policy making process in Uganda are best set out at *Joint Response to Concerns, Evidence-Based Policy Making, Research, Evidence & Policy-Making, IJHPM, Principles of Evidence Based Policy-Making & Role of Evidence in Policymaking in Uganda*.

The grade of the data referring to such barriers is best be assessed as lying under the category of G1. The rationale behind this is that in summary, the data acquired was of great utility in that it was largely capable of providing some answer to the question when taken as an aggregate with only 20% of it either not being capable of such analysis or tending not to be“... *Relevant, Accurate or Precise across more than one of the three categories.*”

53 parcels of data were present for analysis as to the Question **RQ3-** What barriers can prevent access and utilization of research evidence to inform the policy making process in Uganda?

These parcels of data were drawn from thirteen (13) publications that were provided and were going to be analysed for Relevancy, Accuracy and Precision with regards to answering the question posed.

The question posed was essentially requesting details of the challenges, constraints or limitations on the access or use of research evidence capable of informing the policymaking process in Uganda.

Although Uganda is mentioned specifically, it is believed that any limitation, constraint or challenge affecting any Low Income Country (LIC) could just as easily be applied to Uganda. Where a Uganda-specific response is identified, this will clearly be indicated.

As before, the utility of the data identified (from the various publications through quotations) was to be adjudged based on its relevancy to the topic at hand (Evidence, Research, Policymaking, challenges, constraints, limitations & barriers), how accurate that data was in relation to the question (i.e., was the data accurate in that it spoke to the topic presented) and how precise the data was (in that did it provide an answer, some answer, to the question posed).

The data was assessed against a five-level Likert-like scale with G1 being the highest and most desirable grade and G5 being the least desirable.

The grades allotted to each parcel of data were then tabulated and a frequency of the most common grades obtained. This new metadata was then converted into a percentage of the fifty three (53) parcels of data - turning a qualitative assessment into a quantitative one.

An overall assessment of the relevancy, accuracy and precision of such collective data in responding to the question posed (RQ3) was then made and this is it:

Overall (70%), the data acquired was relevant, accurate and precise with regards to the question posed although a significant percentage of the remaining data (11%) was not capable of such analysis.

Of the remaining 19% of data, most (9%)” ... *was not Relevant, Accurate or Precise across more than one of the three categories*”. Whilst of the remaining 10% of data, there was a 4:6 split between data that was “... *Relevant, Accurate or Precise to a greater extent but not necessarily across all three categories*” and that which “..... *was Relevant, Accurate or Precise to a lesser extent across some of the three categories.*”

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study concerns to what extent and to what effect evidence-based research informs or impacts the policymaking process in Uganda with particular emphasis to the Uganda National Grain Trade Policy.

The study noted a trend, mainly in Africa and Latin America, for policymakers to design policy absent any input from relevant evidence - in effect, *in abstract*, and sought to examine the adequacy or otherwise of any evidence provided in the design and formulation of the Ugandan National Grain Trade Policy.

The study had as its **Main Objective** examination of “.... *the contribution of evidence based research in the policy making process of the Uganda National Grain Trade Policy*” and the **Specific Objectives** of finding out “..... *which research evidence informed the design for the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda?*”, “.....*how policy makers can better incorporate research evidence in the policy making process*” and assessing “..... *barriers that can prevent access and utilization of research evidence to inform the policy making process in Uganda*”.

In so exploring the research evidence relied upon in designing and formulating the Ugandan National Grain Trade Policy and assessing how best research evidence could be incorporated in the policymaking process, the study also sought to answer three specific **Research Questions** (“....*What evidence research informed the design for the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda?*”, “... *How can policy makers better incorporate research evidence in the policy making process?*”, “... *What barriers can prevent access and utilization of research evidence to inform the policy making process in Uganda?*”) derived from the **Specific Objectives** set out above.

A **Literature Review** was undertaken of this thematic area. From this review much detail was gained. The following fourteen (14) publications informed key aspects of the discussion at hand:

Sevene *et al*, (2015), Mubyazi & Gonzalez-Block, (2015), Cabinet Secretariat of Uganda. (2013), Amia, (2016), Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, (2015), URT,

(2013), Ssenooba et al. (2012), Santesso & Tugwell, (2016), Elepu and Dalipagic, (2014), Bowen & Zwi, (2005), Melak et al, (2016). Ministry of Health - Government of Malawi, (2014), Elepu and Dalipagic, (2014) and Daniels & Lewin, (2008)

The key takeaways from these publications and the review relevant to the present topic were best summarized as:

For How Research Evidence Can Better Be Incorporated in the Policy Making Process

1. “ ... Policy makers should typically think about holding some trainings or organizing other new channels for consultation during the time frame relying on the significance and likely impact of any policy. This will assist people and organizations in the larger community in forming their responses. It is important to keep in mind the needs of factions which may have special needs and be ready to render pivotal documents available in multiple formats, such as audio and video. In the context of the National Grain Trade Policy, during consultation processes, it is important that stakeholder categories like the poor small holder growers of grain be considered because in many cases, these people are faced with exploitation by the produce buyers. The policy making should therefore seek such evidence and formulate clauses that harmonize such situations so that these growers also benefit relevantly from their efforts.” - URT, (2013)
2. “ ... the application of evidence according to is coordinated evidence generation via mainstreaming information exchange mechanisms” - Ssenooba et al. (2012)
3. These mechanisms to achieve this “ ... include the creation of specialized state offices to oversee research studies, evaluation of state policy and performance audits” - Santesso & Tugwell, (2016)
4. “...To offer contextualized, timely, high-quality evidence and practical recommendations to promote increased evidence uptake and implementation, it is crucial to use competent local researchers.” - Elepu and Dalipagic, (2014)
5. “Focusing on places at various scales, comprehending the players' policy networks, and framing policy concerns more broadly all take equal significance.” - Bowen & Zwi, (2005)
- 6 - 10. Studies evidencing policy making majorly focus on how evidence is used in policy making and factors hindering the use of evidence in policy formulations,

majorly have taken place or focused outside Africa and where Africa has been considered, the Sub-Saharan region and in particular East Africa and Uganda, have been ignored - Melak et al, (2016), Ministry of Health - Government of Malawi, (2014), Elepu and Dalipagic, (2014) & Daniels & Lewin, (2008)

For The Barriers That Would Prevent Access & Utilization of Research Evidence to Inform the Policy Making Process In Uganda

East African policy processes “...demonstrate inadequate communication, a lack of backing for policy, and weak procedures for aggregating interests of shareholders, which leads to distrust among policy players about actors' hidden aspirations.” - Sevene et al, (2015)

Policy makers are reported to be unable “.... to make educated decisions on policy using evidence” -Mubyazi & Gonzalez-Block, 2015

“In Uganda, research is frequently conducted separately from policy procedures.” - Cabinet Secretariat of Uganda. (2013)

“Due to researchers' inability to adequately express policy-makers' top research interests, research utilization is limited.” - Amia, (2016).

The “...National Grain Trade Policy aims(ed) at; Improving Policy, Regulatory, and Institutional Framework, wherein the authors came to the realization that it is crucial to create an efficient policy, regulatory, and infrastructure for coordination and collaboration among the major participants in the grain sub-sector, including producers, storage facility operators, processors, transporters, and distributors.” - Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, (2015)

It is from the perspective detailed at 6 - 10 above that the **Research Gap** the subject of this study was identified which gap this research now aims to fill.

The parameters limiting this study were that it was purely desk research informed by secondary data and scientific publications. To explore the policy's context in great depth, a case study methodology was applied. - Research nexus in Uganda and this

resulted in qualitative evidence being acquired. This qualitative evidence comprised mainly of policy documents, reports and written studies and findings.

There were sixteen (16) key hypotheses and assumptions identified in the undertaking of this study, including industry-related ones, twelve (12) attributable and four (4) unattributed. These hypotheses and assumptions were:

Attributable Hypotheses & Assumptions

Most governments have put aside funds to generate research and translate it into policy although there are still gaps in the link between research evidence and policy development especially in developing countries **(Langlois et al., 2016; Moat et al., 2013; Sutcliffe and Court, 2005)**

Due to the gaps in the link between research evidence and policy development, especially in developing countries, policy makers in government ministries and international organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO), have developed increased interest in utilization of research evidence for policy development i.e. “the research to policy process” **(Hyder et al., 2010: 77; Hanney et al., 2003)**

However, the opportunity of utilizing evidence in the policy making process, has often been faced with barriers **(Hennink and Stephenson, 2005; Oliver et al., 2014; Mutatina et al., 2017)**

The barriers which create gaps in research evidence based policies include limited funds for research activities, external influence, quantity and quality of available research, political influence etc. **(Nabyonga- Orem et al, 2014; Ssegooba et al., 2011; Young, 2005).**

Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) is referred to as "a strategy that assists people in making well-informed decisions about policies, programs, and initiatives by placing the most reliable data from research at the center of policy development and implementation." **(Daniels & Lewin (2008).**

EBPM aims to use a logical paradigm by connecting policy analysis to policy action, whereby "policymakers aspire to handle both social and economic affairs "prudently" in

a political, scientific fashion such that social policy is essentially a social technology exercise." (Gough, Oliver and Thomas, 2013).

Regarding policymaking, The underlying presumption is that decision-makers read research reports, comprehend the findings and their implications, and act to correct their course in the direction suggested. Researchers pose the appropriate inquiries, plan and conduct their studies rigorously, and distribute their results appropriately. (World Bank, 2009).

EBPM seeks to apply a rationalist paradigm by linking policy analysis to policy action whereby 'policymakers seek to manage economic and social affairs "rationally" in an apolitical, scientized manner such that social policy is more or less an exercise in social technology' (Schwandt (1997).

The accomplishment of public sector reform and the delivery of high-quality results for citizens depend on the promotion of good practices in policymaking. The decisions made by policymakers should be clearly based on the most comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of research and best practices. (Republic of Uganda, (2013))

The National Grain Trade Policy was developed in 2015 by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries, much like many other policies, such as the national gender policy, the national food and nutrition policy, and others. In order to formulate, execute, and evaluate policies, MAAIF strategically partnered with other stakeholders. As a result, it reached out to private sector groups to complement public sector efforts in completing the tasks for stakeholders. (MAAIF. (2016).

Due to time and budget limitations, government departments in Africa and South America have official experts sit down and create policies that are neither desired nor practicable since they are not properly supported by the available information. (KLRC, 2015).

Researchers and decision-makers interact frequently, have mutual respect, and communicate well. (Lavis et al, 2013)

Unattributed Hypotheses & Assumptions

Consideration of policymakers as attempting to manage economic and social affairs "rationally" in a political, scientized manner so that social policy is essentially an activity in social technology encompasses nicely into a preferred type of practical policy development involving procedures which proof could impact at various stages.

The grain sub-sector in Uganda is strategically positioned to maintain food security, encourage income development, and have an impact on women in agriculture.

In Uganda, implementation of the National Grain Trade Policy is critical for the development of the national economy.

The qualitative method of research allows first-hand acquisition of knowledge and experience of the subject under study, contextualization of the object under study and acquisition of greater and more detailed data and, sometimes, previously unconsidered insights (Creswell, 2005).

The key results of this study were:

RQ1 - What Evidence Research Informed The Design For The National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda?

Technocrats undertook field studies and engaged stakeholders from the public and private sectors as well as international aid and development actors, asking questions and taking notes. Presumably, notes were taken.

The field research most definitely constituted direct observation evidence followed by evidence from qualitative interviews in Focus Groups meaning it was qualitative evidence that largely informed the design for the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda.

RQ2- How Can Policy Makers Better Incorporate Research Evidence In The Policy Making Process?

Policy makers can better incorporate research evidence in the policy making process by:

bolstering tools for free exchange of ideas and organizations for collecting stakeholders' interests,

Improving dialogue especially in the transmission of research from researcher to decision-maker during the policy-making process,

Seeking, emphasizing and promoting policy support,

Increasing trust amongst policy actors over the transparency of each party's interests,

Incorporating any relevant research evidence within the decision-making process,

Coordinating evidence generation efforts with mainstream mechanisms for information exchange,

Creating “...specialized state agencies to supervise research projects, policy evaluations, and performance audits”,

Using “...”... provide contextualized, timely, high-quality evidence, alongside doable recommendations to guarantee increased evidence acceptance and implementation,” say reliable and local researchers. “Framing policy challenges more laterally, comprehending the actor-policy networks, and focusing on spaces at a variety of sizes also assume equal importance,” the author wrote.”,

Undertaking studies “on how evidence is used in policy making and factors hindering the use of evidence in policy formulations” which focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular East Africa and Uganda,

“ .. hosting a few seminars or setting up additional channels for consultation during the time to assist people and organizations in the larger community in creating their answers.”,

Bearing “ ... in mind the demands of any potential special-needs groups”,

Being “ ... ready to make important information available in different formats, such as large print or foreign languages”,

Seeking “ ... such evidence” and

Formulating“.. clauses that harmonize such situations so that” others, such as growers, benefit.

RQ3 - What Barriers Can Prevent Access and Utilization of Research Evidence to Inform the Policy Making Process in Uganda?

The barriers that hinder access and utilization of research evidence in policymaking in Uganda are multi-faceted and arise from both institutional and contextual challenges. These barriers are outlined in several key documents including the Joint Response to Concerns, Evidence-Based Policy Making, Research, Evidence & Policy-Making, IJHPM, Principles of Evidence-Based Policy-Making, and Role of Evidence in Policymaking in Uganda.

Time Pressure and Rapid Decision-Making Needs: Policymakers often face intense pressure to process and act on information quickly. This urgency, particularly during crisis situations or in response to political demands, limits the ability to thoroughly consult research evidence.

Limited Capacity and Resources: There is often inadequate time, financial resources, and technical capacity within government institutions to access, analyze, and utilize research effectively.

Ignoring of Available Evidence: Despite the existence of quality research, it is sometimes deliberately overlooked due to political interests, conflicting agendas, or lack of appreciation for scientific evidence.

Political Timelines and Institutional Constraints: Parliamentary terms, short political cycles, and unstable institutional capacities make it difficult to integrate long-term evidence into policy development.

External Demands and Priorities: Policymakers may be under immediate pressure from senior officials, advocacy groups, or the public, which can divert attention from evidence-based approaches toward more expedient or populist solutions.

Scientific Illiteracy and Communication Gaps: A lack of scientific literacy among policymakers, combined with poor communication from researchers, often leads to the misinterpretation or underutilization of evidence. Factors such as opacity, spin, and oversimplification further compound this issue.

Conflict and Insecurity: Ongoing conflict or political instability, especially low-intensity or localized unrest, can hinder the flow of information and discourage the use of structured, evidence-based processes.

Political Unpredictability: Frequent changes in political leadership or direction create a volatile environment where consistent use of evidence is difficult to maintain.

Weak Policy Implementation Mechanisms: Even when policies are informed by research, the lack of effective implementation frameworks reduces the actual impact of evidence-based policymaking.

Lack of Incentives and Accountability: Public officials and institutions may lack motivation, training, or performance management systems that reward the use of evidence. Low accountability and instances of corruption further deter evidence uptake.

Institutional and Structural Deficiencies: The absence of performance monitoring systems, lack of clear political directives, poor service delivery evaluation, and irregular political commitment to research all weaken evidence utilization.

Authoritarian Restrictions: In more autocratic settings, restrictions on data collection, censorship, and weak accountability mechanisms limit the production and sharing of credible evidence.

Poor Integration Between Research and Policy Domains: There is often a disconnect between researchers and policymakers, characterized by limited interaction and lack of structured channels for collaboration.

Absence of Institutional Linkages: The lack of dedicated bodies or formal structures to facilitate continuous engagement between researchers and policy actors results in missed opportunities for translating evidence into actionable policy.

From the results, namely that qualitative evidence research largely informed this study, there are slightly more than a dozen ways that policy-makers can better incorporate research evidence into policy-making and that there are also slightly more than a dozen barriers that could come into effect and prevent access and utilization of research evidence in the policy making process, one can logically infer research evidence can be

a valuable tool and catalyst for greater and better decisions through informed policy-making and that whilst that might be so, research evidence can also have many and great barriers to impede its integration into the policy-making framework and those barriers can be overcome where the appropriate will to do so - and the attendant support, exists.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The evidence provided when compared to the hypothetical framework, provides a clear indication that evidence-based research is indeed a key component in the process of drafting the Uganda National Grain Trade Policy. Such evidence, though not consistently reported in all the sources pertinent to the policy, was extensive and much in the way the policy took its course and its substance. The practical appropriateness of research informing policy decisions is attested by the involvement of technocrats, the consultations by the stakeholders and the iterations underlined in the major policy papers. In addition, this case has strengthened the argument that with a better policy climate, which is instantiated by institutional capacity, a stable political commitment, and organized evidence-policy connections, the policy implementation and its effects in Uganda would be significantly improved.

Thus, the results confirm and prove the major assumptions of the hypothetical framework. First, they confirm that time limitations, resource scarcity, and institutional constraints are often used as the barriers to the implementation of the research evidence into policymaking. Second, they emphasize the ideally ambiguous belief that research and policymaking are linear and rational processes, when in the real world, the political nature of political processes, competing interests, and institutional inefficiencies interfere with this relationship. Third, they show that policymaking in low- and middle-income countries, such as some parts of Africa and South America, is often proceeded without sufficient empirical basis, mostly because of the contextual constraints.

The findings will be valuable in the emerging and growing literature that is based on evidence-informed policymaking, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. They also include practical enlightenment in the circumstances in which research is used to inform policy and on the significance of institutionalizing mechanisms bridging the research-policy divide. Notably, they provide empirical support to the theoretical approaches that demonstrate the intricacy of policy environments in low-resource contexts.

There are three areas of research that need to be investigated in future. To begin with, longitudinal studies analyzing the complete policy cycle, i.e. design, implementation, and evaluation process would assist in deciding the role of research in making an impact in the long term. Second, comparative research into these policy areas (e.g., health, education, trade) could show sector-related dynamics and good practices in evidence use. Third, the study on the functions of the intermediary institutions and knowledge brokers may give even better understanding of how to enhance the interface between the producers of research and the policymakers. By responding to these areas, future work has the capacity to come up with more effective models of applying evidence in the process of policymaking, and this will eventually lead to better governance and development outcomes in Uganda and other countries.

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the results, the research questions and purpose, as well as limitations of the study, multiple recommendations to increase the use and integration of research evidence in the policy-making process in Uganda are offered. To begin with, the consequences of ignoring research findings should be sensitised to the decision-makers as to the negative impact not only on the efficiency of development projects but also on the morale and performance of colleagues and subordinates. This means that the inability to use the available research evidence will compromise policy inefficiency and squandered resources on the part of the people hence degrading the credibility of the institutions and its long-term development objectives.

Evidence based assumption requires the need to identify and suit localized contextual realities through implementation. Although certain models or frameworks of policies might seem universal, the differences in the regions or sectors can impede their application, including socio-political forces, resource scarcity, and values unique to

the population. Policymaking based on research should, therefore, be able to respond to these special circumstances.

It is imperative to manage expectations regarding what evidence can and can do and how fast it can change policy. Impractical expectations that lead to outcomes in the shortest possible time may demoralize researchers and policymakers. Policymaking is not always a linear process and incorporation of evidence takes time, involvement and willingness to change.

The paper suggests that all the processes of policy making should be handled as a systematic project with a comprehensive Project Initiation Document (PID). This PID must clearly stipulate the goals, objectives, schedules, milestones, work plans, resource allocations and limitations of the policy initiative. Also, a Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RACI) should be made a common practice to outline accountability, dependency, and workflow among all the stakeholders. The RACI should be publicly and prominently displayed to strengthen transparency and shared responsibility to motivate timely and coordinated action by all parties.

Contribution to Literature

In this section, the author outlines the contribution he/she intends to make to the literature field.

The findings can be useful in the current body of evidence-informed policy literature because they present viable strategies in operationalizing research use in government decision-making, particularly in low-resource contexts such as Uganda. They do not stay in the realms of theory but give an implementation-based prism of looking at the issues of institutional limitations and human actions within which the policy processes are framed. The recommendations close the gap between knowledge creation and policy influence by emphasizing governance tools (e.g., RACIS and PIDs) as key evidence facilitators.

Areas for Future Research

Evaluating the Impact of Structured Implementation Tools (PIDs and RACIs):

Future studies should examine how tools like Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) and Responsibility Assignment Matrices (RACIs) influence the clarity, accountability, and effectiveness of policy implementation in Uganda. This includes assessing whether these tools improve coordination and foster greater use of research evidence in government decision-making.

Cross-Sectoral Comparative Studies on Evidence Uptake:

Research should compare how different sectors—such as health, education, agriculture, and trade—incorporate research evidence into their policymaking processes. This would help identify best practices, sector-specific challenges, and adaptable strategies to enhance evidence use across policy domains.

Investigating Political Economy Dynamics:

There is a need for deeper inquiry into how political interests, institutional power dynamics, and electoral pressures facilitate or hinder the use of research in policymaking. Understanding these dynamics is critical for designing strategies that align evidence use with political realities.

Assessing the Role of Intermediary Institutions and Knowledge Translation Mechanisms:

Future research should explore how institutions like think tanks, policy units, and boundary organizations act as bridges between researchers and policymakers. This includes evaluating the effectiveness of their strategies in translating research into actionable and accessible policy knowledge.

Institutionalizing Evidence-Informed Policymaking (EIPM):

Studies should focus on how evidence use can be embedded in formal government processes through policies, legal frameworks, capacity building, and performance incentives. This would support the long-term sustainability of evidence-informed governance.

Understanding Research Communication and Dissemination Strategies:

Research is needed on which communication formats (e.g., policy briefs, infographics, media campaigns) are most effective in influencing policymakers in Uganda. The aim is to improve how research is packaged and delivered for maximum policy impact.

Analyzing Capacity Gaps in Evidence Use:

Future research should identify the skills, knowledge, and institutional limitations that prevent policymakers and civil servants from effectively interpreting and applying research evidence in decision-making processes.

Exploring Digital Platforms and Data Systems for Evidence Access:

Investigating the role of digital tools and information systems in improving access to timely, relevant, and high-quality research evidence for policy formulation could reveal innovative pathways for strengthening data-driven decision-making.use.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Checklist

Purpose of the Tool

The research tool will aid the solicitation of data and evidence that informed the choice and design for the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda, the impact of the National Grain Trade Policy on the grain production volumes in Uganda, and the strategies through which policy makers better incorporate research evidence in the policy making process.

The tool suggests potential research questions to guide the desk research.

S/N	Research question	Guiding Questions
1	What evidence informed the design for the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda?	Which surveys and consultations were done to gather evidence prior to the making of the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda?
		What was their level of coverage? a) In terms of geographical stretch b) In regards to grains (How many grains were considered?)
		Is there proof that the evidence gathered was a basis for design of the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda?
		What was the level of involvement of expert advisors on evidence before transfer to the policy making process?

2	What is the impact of the National Grain Trade Policy on the grain production volumes in Uganda?	How has the policy impacted grain production in varying geographical locations?
		How has the policy impacted value addition of the grain produced in Uganda?
		How has the policy impacted the size of grain farms overtime?

3	How can policy makers better incorporate research evidence in the policy making process?	The Role of Policy Piloting to the Making of the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda
		The Benefit of Clear Communication Between Research and Policy Spheres in the Making of the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda
		The Role of Institutional Bridges in the Making of the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda
		The Application of incentives to policy makers in the making of the National Grain Trade Policy of Uganda