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Working

Childhood Obesity Policy Document Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Evidence-based decision-making is critical to the formulation of effective policy and practice, but despite efforts to increase the availability of research-based knowledge in the policymaking domain, use of research evidence by policymakers has been infrequent, inconsistent, and at times misinformed. The primary objective of this study is to test the idea that the news media have an important role in connecting policymakers to policy-relevant research evidence. Specifically, this project explores three research questions:

1. What factors influence policymakers' acquisition, adoption, and use of research evidence in news reports?
2. In what ways, direct and indirect, does the inclusion and representation of policy-relevant research evidence in news reports facilitate the use of research evidence by policymakers?
3. What, if any, is the relative contribution of policy-relevant research evidence in news media to policymakers' use of research evidence in policymaking processes?

To answer these questions, this study will track federal policymakers' (i.e., legislators in Congress and government bureaucrats) use of research evidence by collecting, coding, and analyzing a comprehensive set of publicly available policy documents (e.g., transcripts of congressional bills, committees/sub-committees hearings, testimonials, floor debates, government-issued memos and reports, transcripts of public speeches or comments) on the topic of childhood obesity, focusing on the scope, type, context, and timing of policymakers' use of research evidence relative to the progression of the legislative process (see Appendix A) for each of four key federal policies from 2000-2014:

1. School nutrition;
2. School physical education and activity standards;
3. Consumption of sugary snacks and drinks; and
4. Advertising and marketing food to children.

THIS PROTOCOL ACCOMPANIES THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATION

Yanovitzky, I., & Weber, M. (2018). Analysing use of evidence in public policymaking processes: a theory-grounded content analysis methodology. *Evidence & Policy* (advanced online publication). <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/tpp/ep/pre-prints/content-ppevidpold1700095>



Yanovitzky Instrument
1_Policy Documents
Codebook (Complete).pdf



Yanovitzky & Weber, in
press.pdf

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