

Reconciling the “Global” and “Local” by Using Soft systems Methodology (SSM): A case of Organisational Capacity Building in the Philippines

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Abstract:

It is needless to say that institutional capacity building, or organisational capacity building, is necessary for developing countries. However, there are serious problems to introduce these concepts as they are as a global standard. There will be unavoidable frictions between the local culture and the introduction of these concepts as a the global standard. Although consultants use conventional analytical methodologies (Hard Systems Methodology) to solve problems, it seems to me that they are not suitable for this kind of problem.

The Japanese people have dealt with problems relevant to globalisation through a unique way of “management”. Commonly referred to as ‘digesting’, this management has occurred throughout Japanese history especially since the Meiji era. It is the author’s contention that the Japanese globalisation process is akin to P. Checkland’s Soft Systems Methodology (SSM), which includes a guideline to reconcile different worldviews. Furthermore SSM is regarded as the methodology to conceptualise the digesting Japanese management style explicitly.

This paper proposes and tests a new methodology (Soft Systems Methodology) in reconciling the “global” and the “local” through the case of organisational capacity building in a section of the government in the Philippines, and referring to the Japanese way of ‘digesting’ globalisation.

1. Introduction

In a recent conversation with my friend and SSM research colleague Mr. Hazeyama, (who is the Chief Representative of the Jakarta Office of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation,) Mr. Hazeyama stated the following:

“Now in Indonesia, many people are making strong appeals for ‘Democracy’ and the Wahido government is trying to explore the new institution of democracy in various fields. However, Indonesians generally still stick to the conventional life style, though they understand the significant of democracy conceptually. Thus, there is a risk that they will lose their own ‘*form of life*’ or value set for their every day lives with a new democratic institution that is unfamiliar to them. As a consequence of that, they become rabble on the state of losing the conventional norm. The most important thing for Indonesia and the Indonesian people, I believe, is to re-interpret the concept of ‘Democracy’ as their own by coming back to their old saying ‘*Musyawara*’, which means ‘making accommodation by every person’s participation’...”

This story tells us symbolically that utilising USA styles of development as the global standard is not feasible for developing countries. Though developing countries may accept the style of development *in front (tatemae)* in actually, it is not really accepted *behind the scene (honne)*. In other words, it is very difficult for developing countries to truly actualise concepts which donors’ like IMF force them to accept. Some of the concepts the donor requires the recipients of aid to implement are based on the USA style of democracy - the participatory development based on Western individualism and the organisational capacity building with ownership, or the appraisal standards of the World Bank loan, which are institutional assessments and organisational capacity, etc.

The claims by the IMF or World Bank of the importance of institutional capacity or organisational capacity for developing countries are very valid. But the problem remains how to implement these Western-borne concepts in developing countries with different cultures. When implementing these concepts in the developing countries, development consultants still employ the American style problem solving methodology based on USA management philosophy. The basic shape of this methodology is developing “should-be-solutions” by analysing the American model. Investigation of the current situation of a developing country is conducted from their (i.e. the U.S.) point of view. The problem is then defined as the gap between the should-be-solutions and the current situation of the developing country. Top management of the developing country is then consulted as to how to close the gap. This methodology is typical of modern analytical methodology (which is called ‘*Hard Systems Methodology*’), which has been developed in the USA after WWII.

Then question is, then, whether a methodology which forces the local to catch up to the global standard can successfully shape participatory-type development or development with ownership in the developing countries which is the base of the institutional capacity or the organisational capacity. Our answer is negative. We suggest that an alternative approach, ‘*Soft systems Methodology* (SSM)’, is more appropriate in tackling the problems in developing countries.

2. Learning from the Japanese way of globalisation

Throughout Japan's long history, we have encountered several foreign civilisations as an island country. For example, Buddhism in the 7th century, Christianity in the 16th century and Western modern civilisation in the Meiji-era of the 19th century. It is true that Japan has pursued development by taking in Western civilisation as forms of technology and institution since the Meiji-era and American management methodology after the WWII. However, looking into this process in detail, Japan did not implement these foreign civilisation as they were exactly. In fact, Japan's "Japanisation" of Western civilisation or what is called, 'Wakon-Yosai' (hybrid between Western knowledge and Japanese spirit) occurred unconsciously rather than consciously. This has been regarded by many people⁽¹⁾ as a characteristic of Japan when taking in foreign civilisations.

Also, Robertson (1992:p102) points out this kind of Japanese way of acceptance of foreign civilisations as 'crystallisation':

A major example of great contemporary relevance, which I have already mentioned, has to do with the way in which Japan acquired the substantive theme of universality through its encounters with and modifications, along nativistic lines, of Confucianism and Mahayana Buddhism. *Japan's crystallisation of a form of 'universalistic particularism'* since its first encounter with China has resulted in its acquiring paradigmatic, global significance with respect to the handling of the universalism - particularism issue. Specifically, its paradigmatic status is inherent in its very long and successive history of selective incorporation and syncretization of ideas from other cultures in such a way as to particularise the universal and, so to say, return the product of that process to the world as a uniquely Japanese contribution to the universal. (Emphasis added)

The words, 'universalism' and 'particularism' Robertson uses in the above quotation could be replace 'globalisation' and 'localisation' in the context of our discussion. It can be said, therefore, that Japan has historically been able to concile the 'global' and 'local'. How this was achieved is an important theme to investigate.

The key to understanding this enigma is by recognising that the Japanese people tend to comprehend the world in the mutual relationships, while Western people see the world as an object detached from the subject. For example, the Japanese often say "I find myself in nature (*Shizen no nakani ware wo miidasu*)."

In this context, self and nature can not be separated as self is attached to nature. While Western people observe nature as an object in order to control it, Japanese people "feel" nature, aware of themselves in a mutual relationship. In a sense, this is an ambiguous attitude at a pre-conscious level in the unseparated state of the subject and object⁽²⁾.

Typical of this type of relationship being applied in the retail industry is seen in the example of the Ito-Yokado group (IY).⁽³⁾ IY conducts business *alongside* (standing with) the customers, never *for* the customers. In other words, IY does not see the customer or the market as an object to control but perceives the customer or the market in the role of educator - letting them tell IY what they want by themselves. As in IY's case, Japan has comprehended Western technology or institutions not as objects but in a mutual relationship. Japan has internalised the Western technology or institution by reinterpreting and *digesting*⁽⁴⁾ them when Japan put them into practice. As a consequence of this, the Japanese use of technologies or institutions has become very much different from the original Western models, despite the original concepts themselves being Western.

A typical example of this type of dynamic would be the QC (Quality Control) movement after the WWII. Although the American original concept of QC is to *check* out defects efficiently by using the scientific knowledge of specialists in order to get over the high competitive circumstances, the Japanese have reinterpreted it as to *prevent* defects by realising quality in the improved product line, involving workers on site, discussing and interpreting problems, and taking action by themselves in order to satisfy customers' demands for high quality. As a result, while in the USA improvement in quality comes with higher costs, in the Japan improvement in quality comes with lower costs.

In summary, Japan has reconciled the problem of globalisation and localisation by reinterpreting the original concept in a local setting, that is, Japan has *digested* (actualised) the global in the local context.

3. Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)

It is very difficult for the Japanese to explain to foreigners "digesting" as a management mode for globalisation, because the explanation contains tacit knowledge only available to the homogeneous Japanese people. Nonetheless, there has been a methodology akin to the Japanese way of digesting management in the UK, known as Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) - developed by Peter Checkland, former professor of Systems in Lancaster University. Despite the similarities in methodology, Checkland was neither an expert in Japanese management or Japanese culture. Checkland reflected on conventional Western systematic methods for management such as Operations Research (OR), Systems Analysis (SA) and Systems Engineering (SE), which he called 'Hard systems Methodology', and his experience in applying them to ill-structured problems resulting in failure⁽⁵⁾.

The main reason why employment of 'Hard Systems Methodology' to ill-structured problems resulted in failure was that it was very difficult for the problem solvers of social problems to define what the problem was. There were various views of the situation depending upon the interests of the stakeholders. As such, the problem solvers could not define a unique objective to solve the problems. In these situations the 'hard' approach does not work well, as they tend to focus on 'how to' solve problems and not on 'what the problem is.'

Conversely SSM focuses on 'what' rather than 'how', and therefore, also becomes a methodology for making sense of what the problem is. This does not mean, however, that SSM seeks 'consensus', which demands one hundred percent agreement based on objective facts, but instead explores ways to accommodate people who are concerned in the problematical situation allowing subjective world views. In other words, while Hard Systems Methodology defines 'what the problem is' and 'what should be done' uniquely from an objective point of view, then designs a solution to close the gap between the ideal solution and the current status, Soft Systems Methodology comprehends the problem within the relationship of people concerned with the problematical situation. This process is pursued by these people themselves who also shape a form to accommodate the problem. Afterwards, SSM explores action plans which are feasible to their own culture and systemically desirable, comparing the accommodated model with the real situation.

This kind of method of problem solving is close to Ito-Yokado's reform programme⁽⁶⁾ and also, as explained before, the Japanese 'digesting' style of management⁽⁷⁾. SSM conceptualised the Japanese digesting process explicitly as a transparency process, which the Japanese people could not do due to their implicit or tacit cultural characteristics.

Normally, the process of the SSM is described as follows (refer also to Fig. 1):

Find out about a situation in the real world which has provoked concern; select some relevant human activity systems; construct models of them; use the models to question the real-world situation in the comparison phase; and use the debate initiated in the comparison to define purposeful action which will improve the original situation. Taking that the action would itself change the situation, so that the whole cycle would begin again - in principle, a never ending process. Of course your first choice of relevant systems might turn out not to be relevant. You will learn your way to true relevance by trying out a number of models. (Checkland et al 1990; p.6)

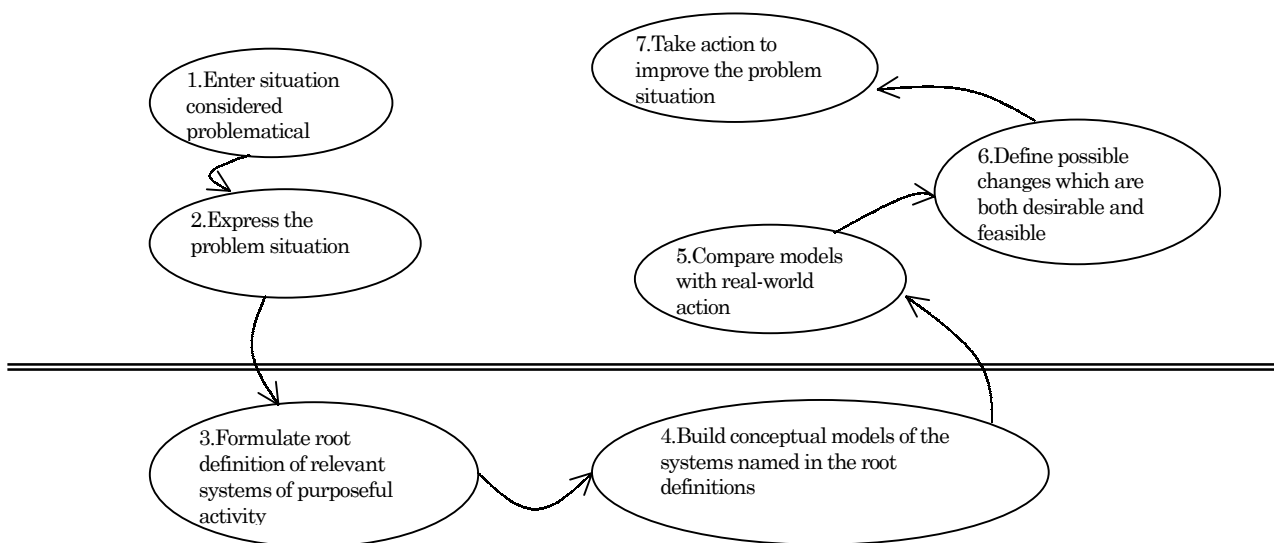


Fig. 1 Seven-Stage Model of SSM (after Checkland 1989 p84)

4. Background of the case

As referred to in the Introduction, although it is needless to say that institutional capacity or organisational capacity building involving participatory development and development with ownership is necessary for developing countries, these countries tend to dislike accepting these concepts as provided. Furthermore, the methodology (Hard systems Methodology) to implement these concepts, which the Western consultants prefer to use, proves unsuitable for developing countries because of their different culture or tradition compared to the West.

If we are forced to take these concepts based on the global standard into a local culture using Hard Systems Methodology, strict conflicts would be drawn between the global standard and local culture.

It is my contention that the power of accommodation or digesting embodied in the SSM is the key to deal with organisational capacity building with ownership or the participatory development in developing countries.

In this case, I tried to use SSM in the River Management Sector (herein referred to as RMSP) which is in one of the Government Departments in the Philippines. Two main points were focussed on in relation to problems in development : (1) to provide a guideline for participatory development, and (2) organisational capacity building with ownership.

5. Description of the Case

5.1 Purpose of the SSM Workshops

The First Workshop (WS1) 27th May 1999 in Diamond Hotel in Manila

To develop the mission (concept) of RMSP by accommodating or sharing participants worldviews and value settings according to the guideline of SSM, in order to improve organisational capacity of RMSP.

The Second Workshop (WS2) 4th August 1999 in Diamond Hotel in Manila

To improve participants views concerning the problematical situation, and draw new ideas or comments from them learning from the comparison between *conceptual* models (based on the concept built in WSI), and the real world, in order to design action plans that are culturally feasible and systemically desirable.

Through WS1 and WS2, participants (about 15 participants each who were assigned from mainly RMSP) learn the methodology for participatory development and shape ownership by sharing the meaning of the mission (concept) of RMSP.

5.2 Process and Outcomes of the SSM Workshops

5.2.1 The First SSM Workshop (corresponding 1 to 3 stage in Fig.1)

In the first SSM workshop, participants explored their problematical situation relevant to river management by the pictorial expression of their own views (Rich picture), then they synthesised their own views into a concept (Root Definition) as a group, accommodating each others' *Weltanschauungen* (worldviews).

Drawing Rich Pictures (RP) (individual work)

Each participant drew and presented their own RP (Rich Picture) from his/her own view about the real situation relevant to river management. The pictures manifested many of the issues from their situation, such as problems of the beneficiaries (Fig. 2-1), institutions (Fig. 2-2), each project (Fig. 2-3), or technology (Fig. 2-4). They were aware that the issues drawn in their RPs were different from those of other participants, however this stage helped them to understand the other participants' situations and views in greater depth.

Formulate Root Definitions (RD), (group work)

After exploring the problematical situation relevant to river management with the pictorial mode, participants formulated a concept or mission of RMSP in the format (RD) of "a system to do X (what) by means of Y (how) in order to Z (why)" by group (all participants were divided into three groups), accommodating each of the participant's view.

They then conducted the CATWOE analysis. During the CATWOE analysis the participants ask themselves who the customer (C) of the RD is, who the actor (A) of the RD is, what the core transformation process (T) in the RD is, what the *Weltanschauung* (W) embodied in the RD is, who the owner (O) is who can stop T, and what the environmental constraints (E) are.

Figure 2-1 ~~WATERPHE~~
~~IS~~ DENNDEN
Rich Picture

Rich Picture

The map illustrates the following features:

- FILLED UP**: Two areas at the top of the map are labeled "FILLED UP".
- Garbage**: Two locations are marked with the word "Garbage".
- Pollution sources**: A label pointing to a specific area in the center.
- NATURAL AGGREGATION**: A label pointing to a hatched area in the center.
- SILTED**: A label pointing to a small, elongated area below the natural aggregation.
- SILTED AREA**: A label pointing to a larger area at the bottom of the map.
- ROAD**: Two horizontal lines representing a road are labeled "ROAD".
- BAY**: A label at the bottom of the map.

Figure 2-3

Figure 2-2

Rich Picture

A hand-drawn map of the Marikina River watershed. The map shows the Marikina River flowing from the top left towards the bottom right. Key features include:

- Stakeholders (represented by house icons):** LUDA (top right), DA (top center, with labels 'LGU's', 'PO's', and 'NGO's' pointing to it), DENR (center), NHA (center), Mabanang (bottom center), PPA (bottom left), DOTC (center right), DOTR (bottom right), and DPWH (bottom right).
- Infrastructure:** A bridge labeled 'SAN JUAN' crosses the river. A 'Storage' area with three small house icons is on the left. A 'MANGAHAN FLOODWAY' is shown on the right. A 'NAPINDAN CHANNEL' is also indicated on the right.
- Other Features:** A 'Flow' arrow points towards the river at the top left. A 'Factory' icon with smokestacks is located near the center. A 'X' mark is placed on the riverbank near the DOTC.
- Text:** 'Engineer V gmo - MFCP' is written at the top right.

Figure 2-4

A stick figure labeled 'DEVELOPMENT' is shown pulling a lever to move a weight up a vertical track labeled 'DRIVEN CAPABILITY'. The track has markings for 00 and 50. The weight is currently at the 50 mark.

Problems

- Lack of proper technology transfer
- Inadequate training programs
- Improper selection of training recipients

The outcomes of the three groups are as follows:

Root Definition (Group1)

River management is a system to manage Water Resource project in a river basin effectively by means of appropriate an adequate and structural and non-structural measures to ensure watershed conservation, protection of river beneficiaries and proper utilization of river resources.

- C(customers): The victims or beneficiaries : stakeholders
- A(actors): those who would do T : all concerned government and a private agencies/sections
- T(Transformation process) : effective management of W.R projects
- W(weltanschauung): the worldview which makes this T meaningful in the context : ensure watershed ansvation, protection of river resources are good things
- O(Owner): those who could stop T : stakeholder, decision makers
- E(Environmental constraints): elements outside the system which it takes as given : Weather distubanees. Pollutants, technical financial deficiencies.

Root Definition (Group2)

River Management / administration is a system to properly manage river basin's by means of establishing one responsible institution in order to prevent perennial flooding and attendant problems.

- C(customers) : Living things
- A(Actors) : Officials and employees of the institution, contractors, consultants
- T(Transformation process) : To manage properly
- W(weltanschauung):
 1. river basins should be managed properly by one responsible institution;
 2. perennial flood prevention is one objective of river management;
 3. too many agencies in-change of river management is not a good thing.
- O(Owner) : Executive Branch of the Government
- E(Environmental constraints) : public opinion, political, economic and socio-cultural environments.

Root Definition (Group3)

Manage effectively and efficiently river basin conditions and functions by construction of engineering and non-engineering intervention, participation of various stakeholders, proper maintenance with sufficient budget allocation, supported with competent manpower and other resources in order to improve living condition of residents in the area and enhance environment.

- C(customers) : Affected residents, stakeholders, end users
- A(actors) : RMSP other concerned agencies (National Local Governments) NGO's community
- T(Transformation process) : Plan, improve, and maintain river condition and function.
- W(weltanschauung) : Improved living conditions through economic stability, sense of security and safety.
- O(Owner) : National Local government Agencies and other stakeholders.
- E(Environmental constraints) : Indigenous group or people, informal dwellers, and political interference Resources.

Facilitator Comments

In this stage, participants used various SSM techniques such as the “what (X), how(Y), why(Z)” formulation and the CATWOE analysis. They could accommodate “what can be seen in the situation” easily, yet not the “why they had to do the what” or “how they do the what”. All three groups provided the similar what (X) such as “manage effectively W.R. project in a river basin” in Group 1, “properly manage river basin” in Group 2, and manage effectively and efficiency river basin conditions and functions “in Group 3, however the why (Z) and the how (Y) in each group were very different. As a consequence of this, the Weltanschauung (W) embodied in the root definition was quite different in each group. This may be because most participants already had some degree of accommodation in what the mission is, but they had no accommodation in “how to do the mission” or “why to do the mission”. In order to share the mission of RMSP as a whole, they would have to also have accommodation in their view about the why and the how aspects of the mission as well as the what.

Concerning the process of accommodation, the Philippine people had a discussion in the debate style, (Western style), but, in the end, opposing views were too easily accommodated, like the Japanese style. Some participants said the Philippine mode of accommodation was somewhere between the Japanese and the Western style. The other reason for this mode seems to come from

their attitude toward money from developed countries such as Japan. They have been depending upon foreign money for a long time, so they tend to feel that the real solution is from the outside world. Even though they had a discussion in the debate mode, they still reached a conclusion easily without deep accommodation. This will be stated again in the evaluating remarks in the final section.

5.2.2 The Second SSM Workshop (WS2) (corresponding 4 to 5 stage in Fig.1)

Based on the Root Definition (RD) which had been created in the first SSM workshop (a concept and a mission of RMSP), participants built the conceptual model (CM) (a set of activities connected by logical dependency) by using Z+2 verbs, needing to realize the Root Definition coherently. They then compared each activity in the conceptual model with the real situation on the Comparison Table (CT), asking themselves “does the activity in the model exist in the real world?”, “If so, how is it done?” and “How is it judged?” By doing so, they learned from the difference between the conceptual world and the real world. The Conceptual Model is like a lens to looking into the real world in greater depth. Finally, they could improve their views relevant to their situation. They formulated new ideas or comments on their problematical real situation.

Building Conceptual Models (CM) (group work)

Based on the RDs of three groups, each group built CM. (Fig. 3-1, 3-2, 3-3)

Facilitator comments

On creating CMs by group, it could be seen that each group understood the Conceptual Model and SSM very well - especially in Group 3, where participants were aware that new activity 6, "get government commitment and establish new institutional structure for river management", which could not draw from the RD logically, was needed to realize the RD coherently. So, they returned to the stage of RDs and re-created the RD. It is often the case in the SSM process to return and reconstruct the existing models, because SSM is not the linear methodology but the endless process for learning.

Comparison Table (CT) (group work)

Based on the activities in the Conceptual Model, participants compared the conceptual model with the real world, asking “does each activity exist in the real world”, “If so, how is it done?” and “How is it judged?”. The outcomes of this stage are shown in Table 1-1, 1-2 and 1-3. (Table 1-1, 1-2 are omitted)

Facilitator comments

During the process to fill out Comparison Table, participants were enthusiastic about comparing the conceptual model with the real world. Since they already have the vast knowledge about their real situations and are very concerned about their problematic situation, the discussion on the stage of CT was deep. However, Mr. Hazegama, a facilitator of one of the groups, felt that they tended to evacuate the comments behind the scenes (*honme*) in spite of their strong concern for their situation. It seems that this is because of their financial dependency upon foreign countries (including Japan). It is very important for the Japanese financial aid side to recognize that problems such as “dependency”. This will be discussed in the final section.

Comments on learning and new ideas (individual work)

Based on the comparison between the conceptual model and the real world on the stage 5 in Fig. 1, the participants improve their views relevant to their situation and draw the new ideas or comments by learning about the previous stage individually.

The summary of the view improvement and comments on learning from the CT are stated as follows:

Group 1

Views improved

- The problems come from these three points: the beneficiaries tend to respond only to their interests, beneficiaries are affected by political power and the mismatch between the actual residence of victims and administrative sections,
- Commonplace data and basic investigations.
- Too much dependency upon foreign aid due to the shortage of funds.
- Absence of a coherent organization.

Comments

- Need for active participation of local governments and the response by the integrated institutions.
- Need for various types of investigation and a master plan for river management.
- Lack of serious views of the problem situation.
- Need for accumulation of experience through raining.

Fig. 3-1

Conceptual Model (Group 1)

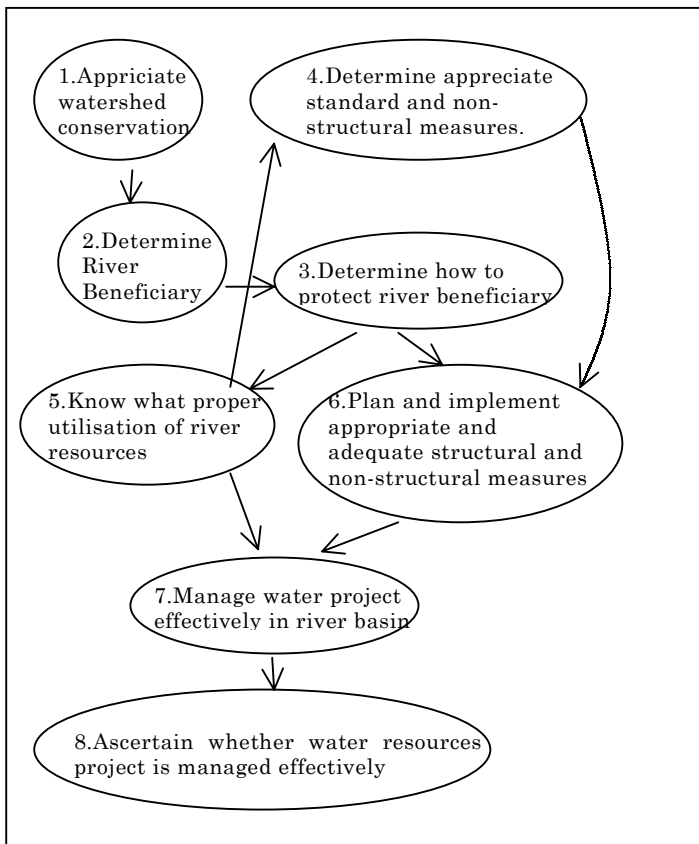


Fig. 3-3

Conceptual Model (Group 3)

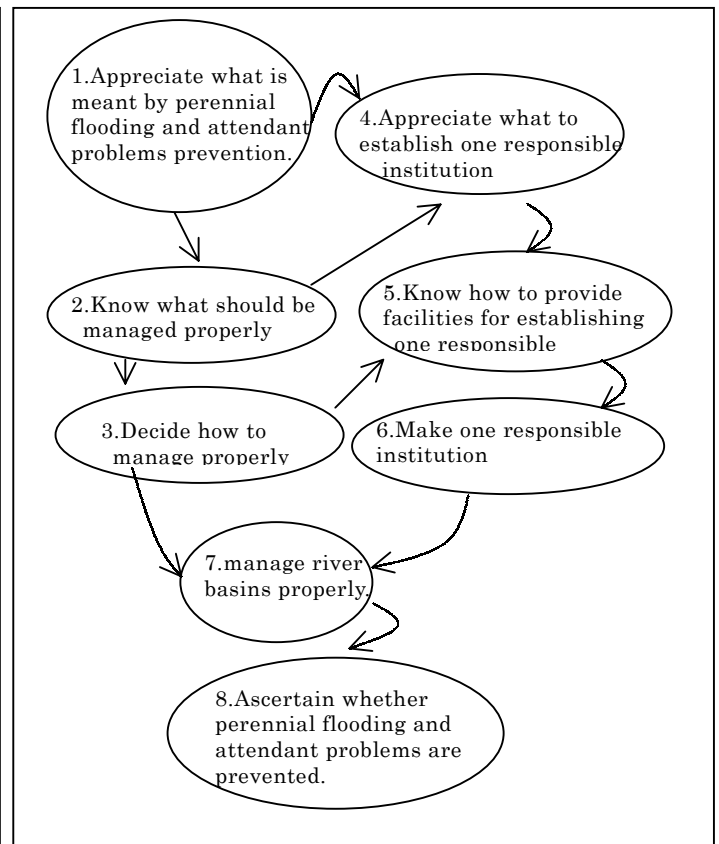


Fig. 3-2

Conceptual Model (Group 2)

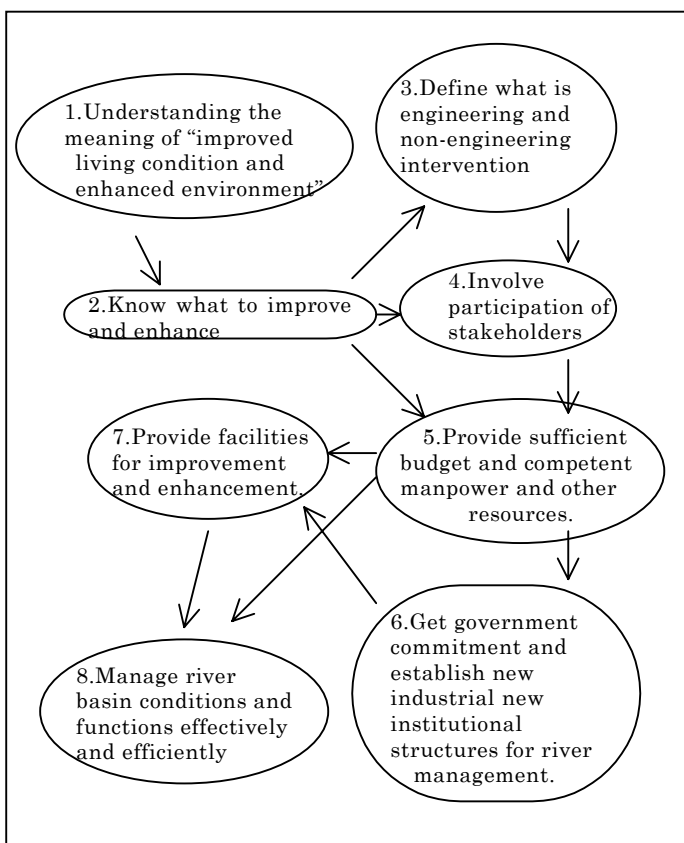


Table 1-1 COMPARISON TABLE

Group 1

Activity	Ex	How is it done?	How is it judged ?
1.Appropriate watershed conservation	×	Given by Government to specific agencies and media. But actual conservation are left to landowners, settlers or tenants laws and interpretations of watershed conservation but most are done sectoral and regionalized	Personal acceptance differs. Difference in interpretations based on different values, attitude, cultures (selfish motives)
2.Determine River Beneficiary	△	Through surveys with help of LGUs. Victims of disasters will come to LGUs and app. Agencies. Beneficiaries come to politicians for help.	Difficulties of determining the real beneficiaries (whole stretch of river basin) sometimes include false beneficiaries, victims of disasters will not have appropriate access because of administrative boundaries.
3.Determine how to protect river beneficiary	○	Through actual surveys and further validation to determine check whether the real beneficiaries compare with order (previous) surveys and national statistics.	Very hard to judge because of difficulties in determination of the real beneficiaries.
4.Determine appropriate standard and non-structural measures.	△	To be determined by actual investigator of existing structures, non-structural measures are determined through reconnaissance survey (reforestation, conservation, etc.)	Insufficiency of investigation survey and study. Lack of survey capability. Lack of coordinations.
5.Know what proper utilisation of river resources	×	Not so clear/proper definitions	No clear understanding
6.Plan and implement appropriate and adequate structural and non-structural measures	○	Mostly relying on foreign sponsors – foreign consultant is doing in cooperation with government agencies and local consultants.	Moderately effective, because of funding constraint. It is necessary to depend on foreign support.
7.Manage water project effectively in river basin	△	Appropriate government agencies are doing in some river basin.	Not well coordinated Dispensed responsibility. There are no many agencies. Lack of clear management policies.
8.Ascertain whether water resources project is managed effectively	△	So many agencies are involved individually doing own evaluation	Not well coordinated/

-Need for participation of local governments and commitment of the central government.

-Be careful receiving foreign aid.

Group 2

Views improved

-The problems are very simple. Any problem results from the lack of the integrated institution which would coordinate many other sub-institution.

Group 3

Views improved

-Lack of political intention to integrate many different interests, because there are various interpretations about the objectives of river management.

-Low priority of river management.

-Shortage of aid except from Japan.

-Need for priority in the same sector.

Comments

-Establish a new institution tentatively in order to integrate different interpretation about the objectives of river management.

-Need for updating data and adequate budget.

-Eliminate political power from decision making.

-Make sure of government commitment about finance problems after making agreements between institutions concerned.

-Establish one responsible institution immediately.

-Delegation to PMO (Project Management Office).

-Reform organization.

-Is it better policy to participate with NGOs?

6. Evaluation of the SSM Workshops

The evaluation of the SSM workshops should be different from the "hard" system methodology. While the "hard" systems methodology is evaluated mainly by the efficiency and effectiveness of the system based on the fact, which is very clear and can be calculated, that SSM is evaluated by the degree of the change on the participants' views and the process itself to change their views.

In evaluating the SSM workshops in the Philippines, firstly we consider the purpose of the workshops and reflect on the results were attained in the workshops referring to the two kinds of participants' general comments drawn in the end of each workshop. Secondly, the learning will be drawn based on the previous reflection, and finally the comments on the future study will be stated.

Summary of the participants' general comments in the first SSM workshop

Could the participants explore their real situation in greater depth and articulate their problematical situation?

A. Could the concept or mission of RMSP with ownership and participation be created by sharing participants' value settings and accommodation of their world views?

A-1 This workshop enables us to *learn more by providing us with more realities* and attainable views regarding basin management

A-2 It helps us *identify problems* concerning existing conditions.

A-3 This is a good chance to give an opportunity for *thinking about fundamental matters* in relation to river management.

A-4 This workshop enhanced my ideas on the other aspects on what, how and why of river basin management.

B. Could the concept or mission of RMSP with ownership and participation be created by sharing participants' value settings and accommodating their worldviews?

B-1 The workshop is effective because of the *active participation* of the attendees.

B-2 The contents of the workshop are adequate to *meet the desired objectives*.

B-3 The participants *share their knowledge or experiences well* when it comes to river management.

B-4 In the process of *accommodation*, participants made *positive contributions* to the discussion.

B-5 *Fruitful in coming up with a long term vision* regarding river management.

C. Requirements

C-1 Up to the end of the day's session, I perceive the real objective of improvement in project implementation was not attained due to *shortage of time*, but I realize that it was one of two workshops to be held.

I expected that a *follow-up seminar / workshop* on the same subject matter was to be held soon.

C-2 I hope that kind of workshop will be held again to build capacity and re-orientation in a *participatory approach*.

C-3 very *short or limited time* frame to conduct the workshop

It can be seen in the first SSM workshop that objective "B" was not attained adequately due to the limitation of time, but objective "A" was attained considerably. It can be said that "B" was attained by the completion of the second SSM workshop. This will be articulated in the following participants' general comments from the second SSM workshop.

Summary of the participants' general comments in the second SSM workshop

A. Could the participants understand their problematical situation and internalize it by themselves?

A-1 It gave us a *clear understanding* on project decision making.

A-2 It will enable us to arrive to an easy and more applicable solution to *undefined structures problems*.

A-3 This workshop *added knowledge* regarding the proper management of rivers.

A-4 The conceptual model *enhanced our ideas* on the problem approaches- We are able to build it and compose it with others.

A-5 The SSM approach had given me the chance to improve my individual concept for group *integration to come up with a composite reaction on vague ideas transforming it to realization*.

B. Could the participants improve their consciousness relevant to their situation by sharing their value setting and accommodating their worldview?

B-1 SSM *encourages participation* among individuals because we can feel that his/her suggestions are being considered through accommodation.

- B-2 One will have a *feeling of ownership* of whatever decision may be arrived at.
- B-3 What is more interesting among us participants is *the comaradery and active participation* in the group discussion.
- B-4 This approach can be very effective because the participants were able to *learn from each other* through the guidance of the facilitators from Japan PECE.
- B-5 Everybody showed to take *active participation* in flood control program by doing their part.
- B-6 SSM enables one another to interact actively and *exchange different point of views boiling them down into one concept* which is very necessary in decision making.
- B-7 Everyone in the organization really has his or her part in every decision that is made.

C. Could the participants learn the appropriate methodology to improve their organizational capacity?

- C-1 It was very helpful in our project implementation because its objectives are carefully explained *by the different perspectives on the subject matter*.
- C-2 SSM will come up to a more intensive capability, especially in the proper implementation / undertaking of river management here in the Philippines.
- C-3 The SSM approach as introduced is I think practical and applicable in the *Philippine setting* especially in the river management.
- C-4 SSM is a very *nice approach in the development of an organization*. This system will apply to the one we are developing like this river management.

Learning from the SSM workshops in Philippine

Principally SSM is a methodology of a participatory type, because in the process of SSM, participants are to share their views by accommodating their value settings or Weltanschauungen (worldviews) in order to articulate their problematical situation and shape a conceptual models. In the SSM workshops in the Philippines, participants created SSM type modes as a mission or concept of RMSP, accommodating each others' worldviews. This resulted in creating the mission of RMSP with ownership. Through these workshops, it can be seen that "participatory approach", "ownership", and "exploring problematical situations by SSM" are the simultaneous process in the SSM workshops. In other words, if participants try to explore their problematical situation and shape "what their problematical situation can be seen" by using SSM, the outcomes such as concepts, missions and models can embody "ownership".

We also learned the Philippine accommodation style. As some facilitators' comments stated, Philippine participants held discussion in a Western style debate but in the end of the discussion, they compromised too easily. It seems that this is due to their history or culture. However, as a facilitator sharply pointed out in the second SSM workshop, this was due to the Philippine's dependency upon foreign aid especially that of Japan. Of course, participants of the Philippines belong to Eastern culture, therefore, they tend to accommodate more easily than Western people who are strongly concerned to the Western individualism. However, if they look for accommodation with ownership, and not compromise easily, they will have to drop their dependency on foreign countries. It seems that it is necessary for eliminating their dependency to discuss their problematical situation using SSM included social analysis.

Comments on the future study

From the learning of this study, several comments on the future study can be pointed out.

- In this study, the SSM was appreciated by the participants of the workshop.
It is recommended that SSM is to be applied in the future study.
- SSM can be used in the training for Philippine's organizational capacity building, as the consultant side suggested.
- Although the participants of the Philippines already have been very concerned for their river management situation, they have not had a chance to discuss "what is the problem?" formally, so the discussion like these workshops should be continued in their organization regularly.
- The participants of Philippine have already shared their problems in greater depth, however, each problem of their situation was too difficult to solve easily and they do not have adequate action plans for problems. Thus it is necessary for them to conduct future study by using participatory methodology like SSM.

7. Conclusion

The case suggested that it was also useful for the Philippines context to apply the Japanese way of globalisation known as 'digesting' to reconcile the global and local. However, of course, the mode of digesting was different in each culture, so each

country should try to digest in their own style. In this sense, SSM is a neutral *methodology* for each culture. Each country may reinterpret SSM in their own way to deal with the globalisation, for instance, from the 'Wa spirit' point of view in Japan, the 'Musyawara spirit' in Indonesia, and the 'Bayanihan spirit' in Philippines. SSM can be seen as a tool for making the process of digesting transparent in each culture.

Notes

- ⁽¹⁾ For example, Yanagida, K., (1975) points out for Buddhism, Pendasan, I., (1971) and Akutagawa, R., (1968) point out for Christianity and Nakamura, Y., (1967) points out for the Western institution.
- ⁽²⁾ In detail, see Uchiyama, K., (1999), Kimura, B., (1972), Watsuji, T., (1934).
- ⁽³⁾ Ogata, T. (1993).
- ⁽⁴⁾ Standing for 'digesting', 'actualising' is the better word in the context of reality-actuality relationship. See Uchiyama, K., (1999).
- ⁽⁵⁾ In detail, see Checkland, P., (1984).
- ⁽⁶⁾ In detail, see Ogata, T., (1993)
- ⁽⁷⁾ The relationship between SSM and the Japanese digesting style can be seen as isomorphism from the Kimura's 'actuality' point of view. On this, see Uchiyama, K., (1999)

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