

Discussion and Conclusion

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1. Introduction

This volume has analyzed the translative adaptation processes of five skills development cases in Southeast Asia. Technical cooperation in each case was provided based on relevant Japanese experience, and included the development of: (i) training process management systems for enhancing industry engagement in TVET (the HaUI-JICA Project in Chapter 3); (ii) national TVET instructor training programs (the CIAST project in Chapter 4); (iii) national skills testing systems (the development of national skill tests in Vietnam and Thailand in Chapters 5 and 6); and (iv) programs to train workers in accordance with local industry skills needs through the formulation of consortium (the Dong Nai MHRD Project in Chapter 7).

The research found evidence of translative adaptation in all five cases. Moreover, some local counterparts working with foreign experts under Japanese development cooperation projects are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of customizing foreign models according to each country's economic, social, and institutional contexts (see Chapters 3, 5, and 7). However, the progress of translative adaptation varies case by case (see Figure 8.1). The evidence suggests that the industry engagement component of the HaUI-JICA Project and the Thai AHRD project have advanced only to the adaptation stage. The development of institutional mechanism for local industry engagement under the Dong Nai MHRD Project and the national skills testing system development supported by SESPP have remained at the learning stage. In contrast, the rest of the cases, namely CIAST, the skills testing component of the HaUI-JICA Project, and the 5S and safety training course component of the Dong Nai MHRD Project have reached the scaling-up stage. Furthermore, even within the same project progress towards translative adaptation differs. For example, in the HaUI-JICA Project, the national skills testing systems

No.	Case	Chapter No.	Japanese model adapted	Country	Translative Adaptation Stage		
					Learning	Adaptation	Scaling-up
1	HaUI-JICA Project (Industry engagement in TVET)	3	Training process management (PDCA)	Vietnam			
2	CIASP project	4	National TVET instructor training program	Malaysia			
3	Development of national skill tests in Vietnam (HaUI-JICA Project/SESPP)	5	HaUI-JICA Project (Machining Center)	Vietnam			
			SESPP (Machining, Electrical, etc.)				
4	AHRDP	6	National skill tests (automotive technology)	Thailand			
5	Dong Nai MHRD Project	7	SS and safety training	Vietnam			
			Institutional mechanism for local industry engagement				

Source: Drafted by the authors.

Figure 8.1. Progress of Translative Adaptation in Selected Cases

component has reached the scaling-up stage. Finally, in the Dong Nai MHRD Project, the development of institutional mechanisms for local industry engagement in TVET remains at the learning stage.

This chapter discusses why the progress of translative adaptation was different in each case, focusing on key enabling factors and development cooperation delivery modes. The next section examines key elements which promote translative adaptation. Section 3 analyzes the relationship between development cooperation delivery modes and translative adaptation, and Section 4 is the conclusion.

2. Enabling Factors for Translative Adaptation

In this volume, we posit that translative adaptation proceeds in three stages: (i) learning; (ii) adaptation or internalization; and (iii) scaling-up or dissemination (see Ohno 2024, Chapter 2). The findings of this research highlighted certain enabling factors which helped the counterparts of development cooperation projects to go through three stages of translative adaptation, as follows.

2.1. Learning stage

The research suggests that the following three factors can help counterparts conduct effective learning as the first step of translative adaptation. First, optimally the learning process should be divided into

two parts: (i) systematic formal learning for explicit knowledge, and (ii) informal learning or on-the-job training to obtain tacit knowledge. Furthermore, at the beginning of the learning process, counterparts should clearly understand what specific knowledge they target for adaptation through policy learning. Targets should be sufficiently broken down to sub-outputs or products supported by a detailed work plan which indicates how those outputs will be delivered. For example, during the Dong Nai MHRD Project, 5S and safety training was scaled up, partly because partnering TVET institutions of the project that have delivered the 5S and safety training developed detailed work plans with lists of sub-outputs using technical guidance from Japanese experts (see Chapter 7). On the other hand, in the same project, the development of institutional mechanisms for industry engagement has remained at the learning stage. A possible reason for this is that the leading government agency that led the partnership development between industry and TVET institutions did not sufficiently understand what sub-outputs or products they should deliver in order to adapt Japanese models for the engagement of local industry with TVET.

Second, learning should not solely be one way from foreign experts to counterparts but it should also include self-learning and mutual learning through which counterparts can deepen their understanding of target foreign models and prepare to convert knowledge to action. For example, CIAST and HaUI adapted Japanese models of TVET instructor training and industry engagement through self-learning, while the two partnering TVET institutions conducted mutual learning during the Dong Nai MHRD Project (see Chapters 3, 4, and 7).

Finally, at the end of the learning process, the target model for adaptation should be selected using a pragmatic approach that takes into account the counterpart's capacity and the economic, social, and institutional contexts. Chapter 3 shows that HaUI selected training process management systems, given their capacity. Counterparts also often proceed with adaptation based on pragmatism underlain by their own logic. Their choice may then go beyond theories or norms formed based on the experience of developed countries. This is how the Vietnamese counterparts selected machining center operations as a target trade for the pilot skill test under the HaUI-JICA Project (see Chapter 5).

2.2. Adaptation stage

According to our research findings, the following three factors are imperative for counterparts to successfully go through the adaptation stage. First, clashes of opinion between counterparts, who have a strong sense of ownership, and foreign experts, are one of the key elements for promoting adaptation. This was seen with the CIAST project, during which foreign experts and counterparts disagreed regarding TVET instructor tasks (see Chapter 4) and with the HaUI-JICA Project, during which Vietnamese counterparts disagreed with foreign experts regarding the selection of target trade for a pilot skill test (see Chapter 5). These clashes, or ‘conflicts’ (Ohno 2022, 8), should be welcomed as opportunities for counterparts to refine their adaptation strategies and underlying logic. These clashes also encourage foreign experts to adapt their knowledge and experience according to counterparts’ requests. In other words, those clashes can contribute to developing a ‘co-creative partnership’ between ODA recipients and donors (see Ohno 2016), since they will also provide foreign experts with an opportunity to adjust a model that they tried to transfer.

Second, healthy competition and the development of communities of practice among counterparts promote creativity, accelerating adaptation. For instance, the results of the CIAST project have been disseminated through the community of practice expanded by the career progression of trained TVET instructors, some of whom moved to the government, which supervises TVET systems, or other public TVET institutions (see Chapter 4). The two partnering TVET institutions improved 5S and safety teaching methods and materials during the Dong Nai MHRD Project through healthy competition (see Chapter 7). They competed for the development of the 5S and safety courses by showcasing curricula and teaching materials with different comparative advantages. These two factors can be regarded as an extension of mutual learning and self-learning mentioned in the previous section.

Finally, counterparts improvise teaching methods, tools, and others with hands-on technical guidance from foreign experts, while it may go beyond the scope of foreign experts’ thought. This improvisation is regarded as

the first step of incremental innovation.¹ For instance, during the Dong Nai MHRD Project, the two partnering TVET institutions improved 5S and safety teaching methods and materials by utilizing materials available in local markets and adjusting them, taking into account the capacity of trainers and students (see Chapter 7). Counterparts are encouraged to promote improvisation when they build confidence based on the accumulation of small successes. For example, partnering TVET institutions in the Dong Nai MHRD Project have kept improving 5S and safety courses based on the confidence formed due to positive feedback from senior management and industry (see Chapter 7).

The research findings suggest there are mindset or emotional changes among counterparts when going through the adaptation stage with the above enabling factors. In particular, a sense of ownership tends to be enhanced. It has enabled many counterparts in the cases introduced in this volume to find ways to adapt foreign models to local contexts. For instance, HaUI has been obtaining skills needs information from industry through partnership activities, such as short-term course for company employees, rather than repeating a skills needs survey conducted during the project supported by JICA (see Chapter 3). Ownership here does not mean that counterparts are overconfident of their abilities though. Rather, they are eager to learn about many models from foreign experts, while at the same time being aware of the right to make their own strategic decisions on how to adapt/utilize them. In the case of the development of HaUI's industry engagement system, they selected and customized Japanese training process management systems after studying other methods, such as DACUM (Developing a Curriculum). Nevertheless, the logic underlying their decisions is not always the same as that of foreign experts, as seen in the selection of machining center operation as the first national skill test for the field of metal machining in Vietnam (see Chapter 5).

Furthermore, this strong sense of ownership tends to be supported or enhanced by confidence in their decision-making abilities and strategies, which is often formed after accumulating small successes. For instance, HaUI has advanced their institutional mechanism for industry engagement with confidence developed based on increased recognition from industry

¹ In the production sites of companies, 'incremental innovation' can be produced through a *Kaizen* approach. See Homma (2024, 329).

(see Chapter 3). The confidence can also lead to passion for their adapted models or themes, for example, as seen in the Dong Nai MHRD Project (see Chapter 7).

2.3. *Scaling-up stage*

The research findings suggest that the following three factors contribute to advancing to the scaling-up stage. First, government involvement—either national or local level—is essential for accelerating the scaling-up and dissemination of an adapted model. During the HaUI-JICA Project, this led to a difference in results between the industry engagement model and the machining center operation pilot skills test (see Chapters 3 and 5). Even though HaUI delivered both outputs, the pilot skill test became a national skill test with strong government support, while the dissemination of the industry engagement model has been rather limited. When a leading counterpart is a TVET institution with sufficient capacity to lead project activities, it may not need government technical support at the adaptation stage. However, the research findings suggest that government involvement beyond periodic reporting contributes to the dissemination of project results beyond a specific institution. Furthermore, as seen in Chapter 7, the result of the Dong Nai MHRD Project demonstrates the effectiveness of local government leadership in responding to skills needs, which can vary by region (Mori and Stroud 2021).

Second, the career progression of counterparts also contributes to dissemination. In particular, the progression from TVET institutions to government promotes the dissemination of an experimental model, as seen in the CIAST project (Chapter 4). Having government officials who have on-site experience in TVET institutions may also make it easier for TVET institutions to involve governments in the early stage of the translative adaptation process.

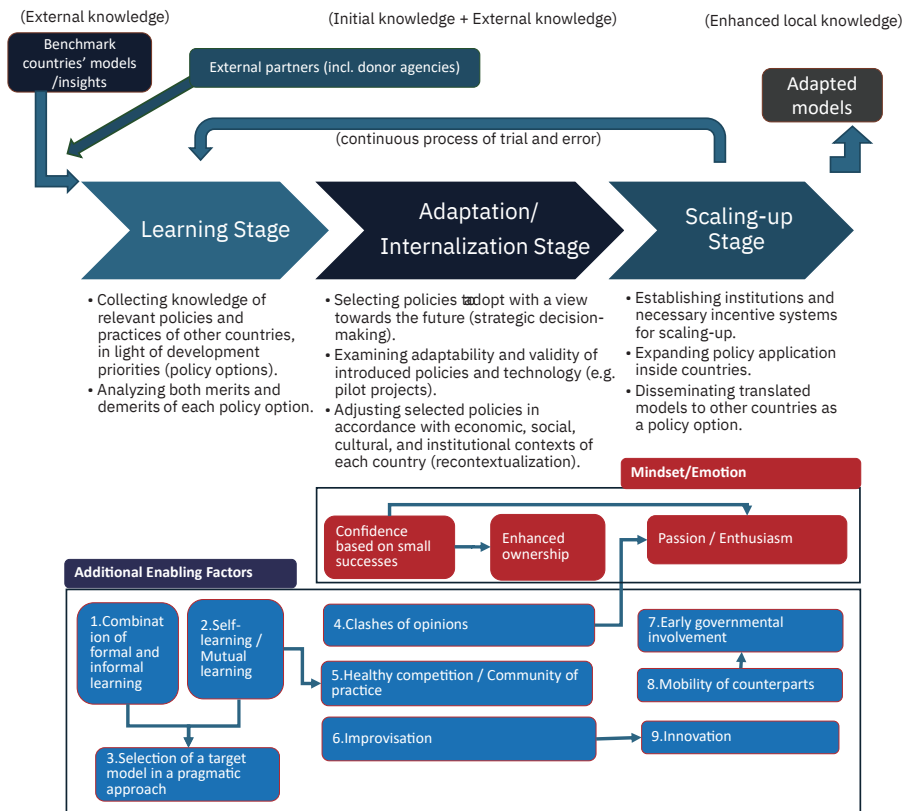
The final factor is innovation, which may happen as an extension of improvisation in the adaptation stage. It can be incremental or pathbreaking, but innovation found in this research was incremental. For instance, during the Dong Nai MHRD Project, the two partnering TVET institutions developed the 5S and safety training of trainer (ToT) programs for other TVET institutions in the province. Such courses do not exist in Japanese technical colleges and industry high schools, so developing them was an innovation (see Chapter 7). While counterparts can still rely on

foreign experts during the adaptation stage, experimented models may not be scaled up or disseminated without innovation led by counterparts. This explains the differences in progress towards translative adaptation in some cases as analyzed in this volume: while the Thai AHRD project remained in the adaptation stage because the project counterparts made few innovations (see Chapter 6), the Dong Nai MHRD Project and the skills test for machining center operation developed under the HaUI-JICA Project reached the scaling-up stage due to innovations spearheaded by the Vietnamese counterparts (see Chapters 5 and 7).

The research findings indicate one emotional element as an imperative in scaling up and disseminating adapted models. Counterparts require passion or ‘enthusiasm’ (see Ohno and Mori 2024, 262) for its positive effects. For example, in the case of the Dong Nai MHRD Project, this enthusiasm appeared to have been transferred from the Japanese experts to the core project members (see Chapter 7). Enthusiasm is likely to be formed based on confidence enhanced through the accumulation of small successes in the adaptation stage. One challenge is to transfer this enthusiasm to others who have not experienced intensive communication or clashes of opinion with foreign experts, as reported by a core project member of the Dong Nai MHRD Project who has been attempting to train other TVET instructors inside and outside their institutions.

2.4. Summary

The research identified nine enabling factors as well as mindset and emotional changes that promote the three-stage translative adaptation, based on the analysis of five cases (see Figure 8.2). These are largely consistent with three key ingredients of translative adaptation and effective local learning: (i) attention to the uniqueness of each country and society, (ii) country ownership, and (iii) process orientation with room for trial and error (Ohno 2024). Moreover, some of these enabling factors are interlinked across stages. For example, the confidence based on the accumulation of small successes enhances a sense of ownership. Counterparts who have overcome clashes of opinion tend to have enthusiasm for the experimental model, which is an enabling factor for scaling-up. Mutual learning practices may lead to healthy competition or a community of practice among counterparts. Improvisation in the adaptation stage is the beginning of innovation, which is imperative for dissemination and scaling-up.



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on Ohno (2024, 10).

Figure 8.2. Enabling Factors for Translative Adaptation

Furthermore, the above findings imply that the success of translative adaptation depends in part on the extent to which a development cooperation project incorporates those enabling factors. This point will be discussed in the next section.

3. Revisiting a Hands-on Approach

3.1. Delivery modes and translative adaptation

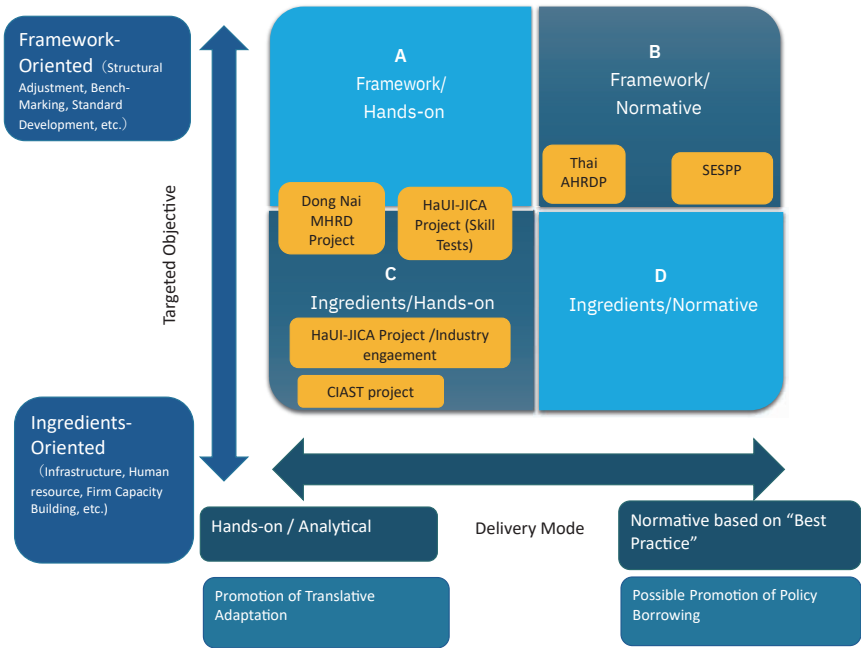
Foreign donors can be catalysts for translative adaptation in developing countries, acting as ‘transfer brokers’ or ‘agents’ who bring external knowledge and technologies through policy advice, knowledge sharing, and technology transfer (Stone 2001; Maegawa 2004). The findings of this volume support the assumption that development cooperation delivered

in a hands-on approach, which concentrates on finding field-oriented solutions based on in-depth analysis of the local economy, society, and institutions (Ohno 2013), contributes to translative adaptation. The development cooperation projects delivered in a fully hands-on approach, namely the HaUI-JICA Project (Chapter 5 for skills tests), the CIAST project (Chapter 4), and the 5S and safety training component under the Dong Nai MHRD Project (Chapter 7) guided counterparts go beyond the adaptation stage (see Figure 8.1). Furthermore, the cases examined in this volume mostly focused on the real-sector activities or ‘ingredients’ (Yanagihara 1998), but the research findings implied the applicability of the hands-on approach to a project which aims to improve the systemic aspects or ‘framework.’² For example, the machining center operation skills test developed under the HaUI-JICA Project became a national skill test, contributing to the development of a national skills testing system, which is a framework for national skills evaluation.

On the other hand, it was also found that some projects introduced in this volume were not delivered in a fully hands-on approach (see Figure 8.3). The SESPP for the development of the national skills testing system in Vietnam was delivered in a normative approach, in part because the project was implemented through the dispatch of short-term Japanese experts (see Chapter 5). In a short-term mission, foreign experts may consider that they do not have sufficient time to adjust the methods and contents of technology transfer with an in-depth understanding of local contexts. The AHRDP in Thailand, which aimed to develop national skills evaluation systems, was also delivered in a mainly normative approach since it basically imported Japanese skills tests, even though Japanese experts adjusted the skills test questions and created opportunities for learning in preparation for tests by taking into account the Thai context (see Chapter 6). Delivery mode selection may be affected by various factors, but the above findings imply that a normative approach tends to be applied even for Japanese development cooperation projects which target framework development.

Furthermore, even though the hands-on approach may be associated with translative adaptation, its application may not always guarantee that counterparts reach the final stage of the translative adaptation process, namely scaling-up. For example, the dissemination of HaUI’s industry

² See Chapter 2 for details of the ‘ingredients’ and ‘framework’ approaches.



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on Ohno (2024, 10).

Figure 8.3. Mapping Selected Cases by Its Objective and Delivery Mode

engagement model has been limited, even though it has reached the adaptation stage (see Chapter 3). In the Dong Nai MHRD Project, the development of institutional mechanism for industry engagement in TVET has remained in the learning stage (see Chapter 7). This section examines what elements of the hands-on approach can help counterparts advance the translative adaptation process.

3.2. *Enhancing the hands-on approach for translative adaptation*

The findings on enabling factors in Section 2 also indicate how a hands-on approach can be improved in order to assist counterparts in advancing translative adaptation of foreign models for skills formation. First, the optimal combination of formal and informal learning opportunities is important. For example, one of the reasons for the successful scaling-up of 5S and safety training in the Dong Nai MHRD Project was the combination of systematic formal learning for explicit knowledge and on-the-job

training for tacit knowledge led by Japanese experts with clear outputs and sub-outputs (see Chapter 7). On the other hand, another component of the project, the development of regional institutional mechanisms for industrial engagement in TVET, relied largely on on-the-job training. As a result, this component has remained in the learning stage. This means that systematic formal learning, in combination with informal learning, is useful even in a development cooperation project conducted by a hands-on approach with many on-the-job training opportunities.³

Second, even though hands-on technical guidance may facilitate translative adaptation, foreign experts' intervention strategies should continue to be adjusted during project implementation. For example, the two partnering TVET institutions of the Dong Nai MHRD Project accelerated the adaptation of 5S and safety training when Japanese experts purposely reduced their intervention in the details of the training programs in order to encourage the institutions' leadership (see Chapter 7). In addition, HaUI has continued adapting its industry engagement model based on the Japanese training process management system since the completion of the HaUI-JICA Project (see Chapter 3). In short, foreign experts should dynamically and flexibly change their technical guidance strategies as counterparts develop their capacities.

Third, clashes of opinion should be reconciled as much as possible. The case studies in this volume suggest that clashes of opinion or conflicts between counterparts and foreign experts are important, but only if those conflicts are resolved. According to the authors' experience and observations in the HaUI-JICA Project and the Dong Nai MHRD Project, formal and informal discussions often succeeded in reconciling clashes of opinion. An example of the latter was a tea-break discussion during or after formal meetings and conversations during study trips in which both sides spent some days together. On-line meeting tools are very useful for formal meetings, but informal discussion does not often occur in on-line meetings, according to the authors' experience. Therefore, it is very important to secure opportunities for informal discussion, in addition to formal meetings.

³ Ohno and Mekonen (2024, 132) also mentioned that 'standardized' training is one of the critical factors for successful national movements, which can be regarded as 'scaling-up' in the translative adaptation process.

Fourth, project activities should be designed to produce small successes, which can include products or sub-outputs. Envisaging and pursuing impactful end-results of projects are indeed important, in accordance with the result-based management (RBM) system (UNDG 2011). However, when promoting translative adaptation, we have found that the accumulation of small successes will enable counterparts to adapt and scale up foreign models. For example, HaUI and the two partnering TVET institutions in the Dong Nai MHRD Project have proceeded with adaptation and scaling-up based on the confidence they built with positive feedback from inside and outside the institution (see Chapters 3 and 7). This indicates that small successes tend to motivate counterparts to keep working to achieve larger successes. Jin (2024, 295) called this process a 'circular relationship' between motivation and results in *Kaizen* activities. Even though those small successes may not be necessarily counted as higher-level 'results' of the RBM system, it is still important to keep setting targets to produce small results in project implementation.

Fifth, a space for counterpart-led creativity should be maintained. The research findings suggest that counterpart-led creativity in the adaptation stage leads to the innovation in the scaling-up stage (see Chapter 7), which also functions as another learning opportunity (see Chapter 2). To promote counterpart leadership, foreign experts should be less involved with activities for which counterparts have demonstrated sufficient capacity. Doing so creates a space for them to be creative. The lack of counterpart-led creativity is likely to be one of the reasons that some cases, such as AHRDP and the development of institutional mechanisms for industry engagement in the Dong Nai MHRD Project, did not reach the scaling-up stage.

Finally, the promotion of mutual learning and communities of practice should be integrated into technical cooperation. These elements are especially important for projects which cannot afford long-term resident foreign experts. If there are sufficient opportunities for some counterparts to share their knowledge, challenges, and workable solutions, counterparts will be able to proceed with adaptation and dissemination even without resident foreign experts. This is one of the key factors which explains the difference between the Dong Nai MHRD Project and SESPP, both of which have relied on the short-term missions of Japanese experts. The former reached the scaling-up stage through the promotion of mutual learning among partnering TVET institutions, while the latter has remained in the

learning stage. Furthermore, it is desirable that communities of practice or mutual learning networks be maintained in the long run beyond the project implementation period. This can be done through a broader framework of bilateral economic cooperation (see Ohno and Mori 2024) or networking between those with similar experience, interest, and enthusiasm through thematic training programs⁴ or the development of alumni societies of graduates or trainees (see Ohno 2017).

Foreign donors and experts can facilitate mutual learning by providing not only success stories but also challenges and possible solutions, from which developing countries can learn a lot of lessons. For example, HaUI and two model TVET institutions in the Dong Nai MHRD Project have been striving to encourage their lecturers to actively engage in the development of partnerships with industry, but some of them tend to hesitate to put significant effort into industry engagement due to time constraints (see Chapters 3 and 7). This is a common challenge in developed countries as well. Therefore, sharing the experience of trial and errors from developed countries assists developing countries to produce viable solutions (in their social, economic, and institutional contexts), as HaUI established the Center for Enterprise Partnership (CPA) designated for industry engagement, after learning the committee-based industry engagement mechanism in Japan (see Chapter 3). In this sense, a lack of sharing trial-and-error stories may be one of the reasons that the institutional mechanism for local industry engagement based on the consortium model in Osaka has not reached the scaling-up stage in Dong Nai province of Vietnam (see Chapter 7).

In short, the integration of the above elements with a hands-on approach will help a development cooperation project systematically promote translative adaptation in the field of skills formation. The above measures can be applied selectively, even if the implementation period of development cooperation projects is shortened and it becomes difficult to attach resident foreign experts on a long-term basis.

⁴ For example, JICA has been providing various thematic training programs entitled the 'Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP),' by inviting trainees from various regions. See JICA (2024).

3.3. Adaptation required in transfer agent

The research findings imply that adaptation is required not only for the counterparts of development cooperation projects but also for donors and foreign experts who act as a transfer agent for foreign models in the following ways. This mutual adaptation makes development cooperation a ‘co-creative partnership,’ which benefits both ODA recipients and donors (see Ohno 2016).

First, foreign experts must attempt to understand the logic underlying counterparts’ adaptation strategies by respecting their ownership of the project. Research suggests that counterparts’ logic may not necessarily follow the standards or principles of foreign experts, which are usually formed based on their experience in developed countries. For example, HaUI, supported by the Vietnamese government, insisted on developing a pilot skill test for machining center operation contrary to the Japanese experts’ proposal to start with skill tests for the operation of conventional machine tools (see Chapter 5). Although their proposals sounded irrational to the Japanese experts, understanding their logic and respecting their ownership enabled HaUI to advance a pilot test as the first national skill test in the field of machining. This does not mean that foreign experts should simply agree to any counterpart proposal, since clashes of opinion are also important (see Section 2.2). However, when they realize that the suggestion of counterparts is supported by a logic based on the local context, foreign experts need to adapt themselves and concede to their counterparts’ proposals on a case-by-case basis.

Second, although a hands-on approach may contribute to translative adaptation, foreign experts should take a hands-off approach in some project aspects in order to promote counterpart leadership and creativity. For instance, the lecturers of two partnering TVET institutions started demonstrating their leadership and creativity in improving teaching materials when the Japanese experts involved stepped back from intervention in detailed activities (see Chapter 7). This may make sense theoretically, but it can be difficult practically, especially when wide knowledge or capacity gaps exist between foreign experts and counterparts. For example, due to this dilemma, AHRDP experts, who mainly come from industry, had to lead most project activities, including the adaptation of Japanese national skill tests. As a result, the project did not reach the scaling-up stage, in contrast to the case of the national skills

test development for machining center operations in Vietnam in which counterparts led project activities with technical guidance from Japanese experts (see Chapters 5 and 6). There is no easy way to solve this dilemma, but, at a certain stage of the project, foreign experts need to leave some details for counterparts to handle and let them experience the process of trial-and-error.

Finally, donors and foreign experts need to be aware that translative adaptation is a dynamic process. For instance, even though counterparts have adapted Japanese training process management processes and its national skill tests at present, this does not guarantee that Vietnamese counterparts will stick to those models (see Chapters 3 and 5). They will continuously elaborate the adapted models by learning about other countries' cases. Therefore, donors and foreign experts must realize that counterparts will make their own choices on whether they will continue to adapt the models they transferred, modify their courses to reflect other countries models, or develop their own unique or hybrid model. Eventually, developing countries do not see the need to categorize their system as a particular type developed by donor countries (see Chapter 5). Accepting unexpected outcomes might be a slightly painful experience for foreign experts and donors who are often confident of the models they transfer. However, this can be a valuable learning opportunity for them. In fact, the time that the authors find the most rewarding in developing cooperation is when counterparts created innovative products or models beyond the scope of our thought.

In short, foreign experts must continuously adjust their technical guidance strategies and provide prescriptions suitable for each country's skills formation system, while ensuring the quality, effectiveness, and impact of results. To achieve this, it is ideal for them to have sufficient knowledge of skills formation and regional economic, social, and institutional contexts, although it may be challenging to find such experts all the time. Therefore, technical experts also need to keep learning regional contexts from counterparts or other experts, just as counterparts are learning technical knowledge from them. This 'co-creative partnership' may benefit donors in the long term (see Ohno 2016).

4. Conclusion

This volume has analyzed the translative adaptation processes of development cooperation projects in the field of TVET in Southeast Asia, based on the theoretical framework that includes three steps counterparts go through to adapt foreign models: learning, adaptation, and scaling-up (Ohno 2024). The research found evidence of translative adaptation in all five cases and an increasing awareness of its importance among the counterparts of most selected projects.

On the other hand, the research findings indicate that each project, or its components, is in various stages of the adaptation process. Progress depends on whether counterparts have experienced or acquired some knowledge or other factors that enable them to continue the translative adaptation process. These include: (i) self and mutual learning in the learning stage; (ii) a strong sense of ownership, clashes of opinion, and healthy competition in the adaptation stage; and (iii) early involvement of government and innovation in the scaling-up stage. These elements also indicate how a hands-on approach for technical cooperation can be enhanced to promote translative adaptation.

Furthermore, adaptation is required for not only counterparts but also donors and foreign experts who act as transfer agents. In order to promote translative adaptation, they must continuously adjust their intervention strategies and develop their capacity for providing suitable prescriptions for each country's skills formation system. In particular, donors and foreign experts need to be aware that translative adaptation is a dynamic process. While some counterparts may choose to adapt Japanese skills formation models, they will keep customizing them and may end up adapting other countries' models or develop a unique or hybrid model, based on their circumstances. Eventually, developing countries may not see much necessity to categorize their system as a particular type.

This research also suggests the need for further analysis of translative adaptation mechanisms. One key element is a strong sense of ownership, which is a driver of translative adaptation, as shown by the results of the case studies in this volume. The research found that counterpart ownership became explicit or enhanced through Japanese development cooperation projects. However, a question remains—how can we facilitate translative adaptation processes if counterparts demonstrate little ownership

throughout a development cooperation project? This is a critical question for projects targeting skills formation, for which there is no 'one-size-fits all' model (Eddington and Toner 2012, 22; Dobbins and Plows 2016, 12). Skills formation systems can vary depending on industry characteristics and the institutional contexts of each country or even locality (Mori 2019; Mori and Stroud 2021). Furthermore, the roles of TVET differ by: (i) industrialization and skills demand progress; (ii) degree of higher education expansion; (iii) expansion and quality of general education; and (iv) social norms and recognition of TVET (Mori and Ohno 2021). Therefore, each country has to adapt its skills formation model, including TVET systems, considering those factors. When a country or region does not demonstrate ownership at all, it may be that technical cooperation in a normative approach is an alternative. However, this may not lead to the development of a sustainable skills formation model, since the simple import or borrowing of other countries' models will not work in the long run (Ashton and Green 1996; Allais 2010).

It is hard to know whether counterparts' sense of ownership can be developed through technical cooperation or if it is an innate characteristic. Nevertheless, our research findings imply that there is a group of people who are eager to improve their skills formation systems through learning and adapting other countries' models, even though they might not be in the majority or have political power. We also found that step-by-step achievement and accumulation of small successes can contribute to confidence building, leading to fostering of ownership. Therefore, donors and foreign experts must identify and assist those who are striving to improve skills formation models in national or local governments, TVET institutions, employer organizations, worker organizations, or other social partners, while persistently attempting to convince their senior leaders to support these initiatives. In this sense, there is always a need to strive for breakthroughs to enhance counterparts' ownership of a development cooperation project and their willingness to lead the translative adaptation process. It is also important to pay attention to the process of externalizing 'tacit' knowledge and creating 'explicit' knowledge to share with wider stakeholders (Nonaka and Hirose-Nishihara 2018). For this, a broader knowledge co-creation platform beyond a specific project is also needed (Ohno 2016, 2017).

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