

Perception of Participants on Monitoring and Evaluation of Extension Program: A Case Study of International Training Course in Coastal Fisheries Management and Extension Methodology

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to: 1) compare the perception of participants on the level of usefulness and the level of implementation on the extension program monitoring and evaluation; 2) explain why participants implemented the extension program evaluation at the moderate level; and 3) seek for suggestions to increase the organization awareness of the extension program evaluation.

Population were fourteen participants attending the International Training Course in *Coastal Fisheries Management and Extension Methodology* who directly involved with the extension program planning and evaluation in their job description. Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) organized the training from 7 June to 21 July 2004. Instrument was questionnaire and focus group discussions asking participants after the extension program evaluation lectures.

Findings were: 1) Twelve out of seventeen items of evaluation steps were perceived as more usefulness. On the other hand, ten items were illustrated as more implementation and seven items were expressed as moderate implementation; 2) the explanation why participants implemented at the moderate level were: inadequate staff members to do extension program evaluation, limitation of budget, and lack of organization concerns; 3) suggestions included stimulating the organization awareness at the staff and organization level.

Key words: extension, extension methodology, program evaluation

INTRODUCTION

The International Training Course in Coastal Fisheries Management and Extension Methodology was organized by the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, (SEAFDEC) Training Department, during 7 June to 21 July 2004. The

Course focused on the modern principles and concepts of the coastal fisheries and resource management. The emphasis was also on the extension concepts, methodology, and implementation in order to involve the local communities and be able to handle the small –scale fishery problems and constraints. There were twenty-five participants

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from twelve countries attending the training. They were from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The monitoring and evaluation of extension program was one among the extension courses. Its primary concern was to discuss the steps to evaluate the program particularly at the project level. Participants were encouraged to think and worked as a group to come up with the methods to monitor and evaluate the program. Group discussions, brainstorming, questions and answers, case studies and among others were techniques in the monitoring and evaluation of extension program sessions.

The researchers who were also the course lecturers needed to know the answer to the following questions:

1. What were the perceptions of participants on the level of usefulness and the level of implementation of the extension program monitoring and evaluation and what were the reasons?
2. How could the participants increase their organizational awareness on the importance of the extension program evaluation?

Literature review

The review of related literatures included:

1. Steps in monitoring and evaluation of extension program.
2. Perception of participants on level of usefulness and level of implementation.

Steps in monitoring and evaluation of extension program (Horton *et al.*, 1993)

1) Developing a hierarchy of program objectives (Swanson, 1984)

In doing the monitoring and evaluation, the program objectives should be explicitly defined. Also, their linkages with various activities, inputs, processes, and outputs should be established.

2) Determining information needs and choosing indicators (UNACC Task Force, 1984) The aim should be to reduce information needs to

most essential, and to choose relevant, meaningful, and objective indicators. This meant selecting indicators not only for monitoring, but also for ongoing, terminal and ex-post evaluation.

The critical questions to be answered by the monitoring and evaluation staff (M&E staff) were as follows:

- 2.1) Who needs information
- 2.2) For what purpose
- 2.3) What kind of information they need
- 2.4) How often they need

3) Reviewing the existing management information system

The purpose of the review should be to make optimum use of data already being generated both within and outside the program and to minimize the collection of additional data from the primary sources. The M&E staff should carefully examine:

- 3.1) Contents of the data and indicators used
- 3.2) The format of selected data
- 3.3) The frequency of the existing reports, and keeping in mind the specific information needs of the program management.

4) Surveying secondary sources of information while exploring the availability of data for program M&E from the secondary sources, the M&E staff should check the usefulness and reliability of such data against the following questions:

- 4.1) How current are the data?
- 4.2) Can the available data be disaggregated to meet the needs of a specific program with sufficient accuracy?

4.3) Are the definitions and categories of available data consistent with program M&E requirements? If not, can these be adopted without losing the relevance and reliability of the data?

5) Collecting primary data (World Bank Staff, 1980) Primary data should be collected for monitoring, ongoing, and ex-post evaluation. This should be done by various methods. Those included: observation, household samples, in-depth case studies, and interviews. These methods should be conducted by the professionally trained M&E staff.

6) Analyzing the data The main task of the program M&E staff was to collect and analyze the data on input and output flows in order to monitor progress and to identify constraints, shortfalls or unanticipated problems. Such problems required the corrective action by the program management. Monitoring and ongoing evaluation activities should include the following aspects:

6.1) Physical facilities and infrastructure such as time schedules, costs, and targets were arranged according to plan and budget.

6.2) Organizational aspects consisted of staff recruitment, training, and turnover, inter-organizational cooperation, and relations with other public and private organizations with beneficiary groups in particular.

6.3) Delivery systems included volume of services or inputs, efficiency in delivery system, deliveries and costs in conformity with plans, geographical coverage, outreach to the target groups, percentage of small fishermen reached in relation to the total number of fisher folk in an extension program.

6.4) Result achievement covered outputs, effects or immediate and intermediate level objectives attained. Also, it involved impact such as fish products, benefits, and costs both direct and indirect, employment and income generation, if any, by household.

7) Communicating findings and recommendations Reports of M&E findings and recommendations should be submitted to the program manager and, through him / her, to the higher authorities concerned. To be effective, written reports should be simple, straightforward and bias-free. The focus should be on the important findings and recommendations rather than on the research methodology and source of data.

The most effective channels for communication M&E findings and recommendations were regular staff meetings or responsible authorities meeting. The advantage was that the M&E findings could be actively shared with those who could take immediate

action. In addition, the M&E staff could get feedback, and errors should be corrected.

8) Continuing on going evaluation during program implementation The purpose were as follows:

8.1) Evaluating overall performance in program implementation.

8.2) Establishing whether program objectives were achieved or were likely to be achieved and whether there were unanticipated side effects.

8.3) Assessing whether the assumption in the program design were valid.

9) Conduct terminal and ex-post evaluations was to evaluate after the completion of the program with regard to:

9.1) Its performance according to its plan.

9.2) Its impact in terms of the economic, social and environmental objectives particularly with reference to the target groups.

9.3) Its organizational development including the organization for project management and delivery of services at the grass root level.

Perception of participants on level of usefulness and level of implementation

Based upon the studies of Bryk on the stakeholder- based evaluation model, it was indicated that to evaluate the program, ones had to be conscious of the stakeholders' needs, problems, and perception (Bryk, 1983). The expressions of their viewpoints would be the first step toward their value perception. The positive judgment would create the open learning and friendly atmosphere. On the other hand, the negative decision would affect the negative awareness and eventually reflect on the denial behavior. It was, therefore, necessary for the monitoring and evaluation staff to include the stakeholders' perception in their studies.

In this study the stakeholders were fourteen international trainees whose job responsibilities were directly involved with the extension program planning and evaluation. Their viewpoints would be examined on the level of usefulness and level of implementation on the extension program monitoring and evaluation.

The descriptive analysis would be employed to assure their views were taken into account. The focus groups were utilized to discuss why they implemented the monitoring and evaluation at the moderate level and how they should increase their organizational awareness on the importance of the fisheries extension program evaluation.

Objectives of the study

1. To compare the perception of participants on the level of usefulness and the level of implementation on the extension program monitoring and evaluation (and what the reasons were).

2. To seek for suggestions on how to increase the organizational awareness on the importance of the extension program evaluation.

Operational definition

“Perception” referred to the opinion of participants on the level of usefulness and level of implementation on the extension program monitoring and evaluation.

“Participants” referred to the fourteen trainees attending the International Training Course in Coastal Fisheries Management and Extension Methodology during 7 June to 21 July 2004. This group of trainees indicated that they were directly involved with the extension program planning and evaluation.

“Level of usefulness” referred to the expression of opinion on the level of usefulness, which was classified by five categories as follows:

Most	usefulness	=	5	scores
More	usefulness	=	4	scores
Moderate	usefulness	=	3	scores
Less	usefulness	=	2	scores
Least	usefulness	=	1	score

“Level of implementation” referred to the expression of opinions on the level of practice classified by five categories as follows:

Most	implementation	=	5	scores
More	implementation	=	4	scores
Moderate	implementation	=	3	scores

Less implementation = 2 scores

Least implementation = 1 score

Conceptual framework

The framework indicated the comparison between the level of usefulness and level of implementation on the extension program monitoring and evaluation (Figure 1)

METHODOLOGY

Population. There were fourteen participants who directly involved with the extension program planning and evaluation. These participants attended International Training Course in Coastal Fisheries Management and Extension Methodology organized by SEAFDEC from 7 June to 21 July 2004.

Instrument. Questionnaire was an instrument to gather the information right after the lectures of extension program monitoring and evaluation. It comprised of two parts:

Part 1: Questions on basic characteristics of trainees.

Part 2: Perception of participants on the level of usefulness and level of implementation on the extension program monitoring and evaluation.

A focus group interview was employed to seek for explanation on why participants implemented at the moderate level and how to increase their organizational awareness on the program monitoring and evaluation

Data analysis

Descriptive analysis was utilized to describe basic characteristics of trainees and fourteen participants in particular.

Mean scores and interpretation

Mean scores	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Most usefulness / implementation
3.41 – 4.20	More usefulness / implementation
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate usefulness / implementation
1.81 – 2.60	Less usefulness / implementation
1.00 – 1.80	Least usefulness / implementation

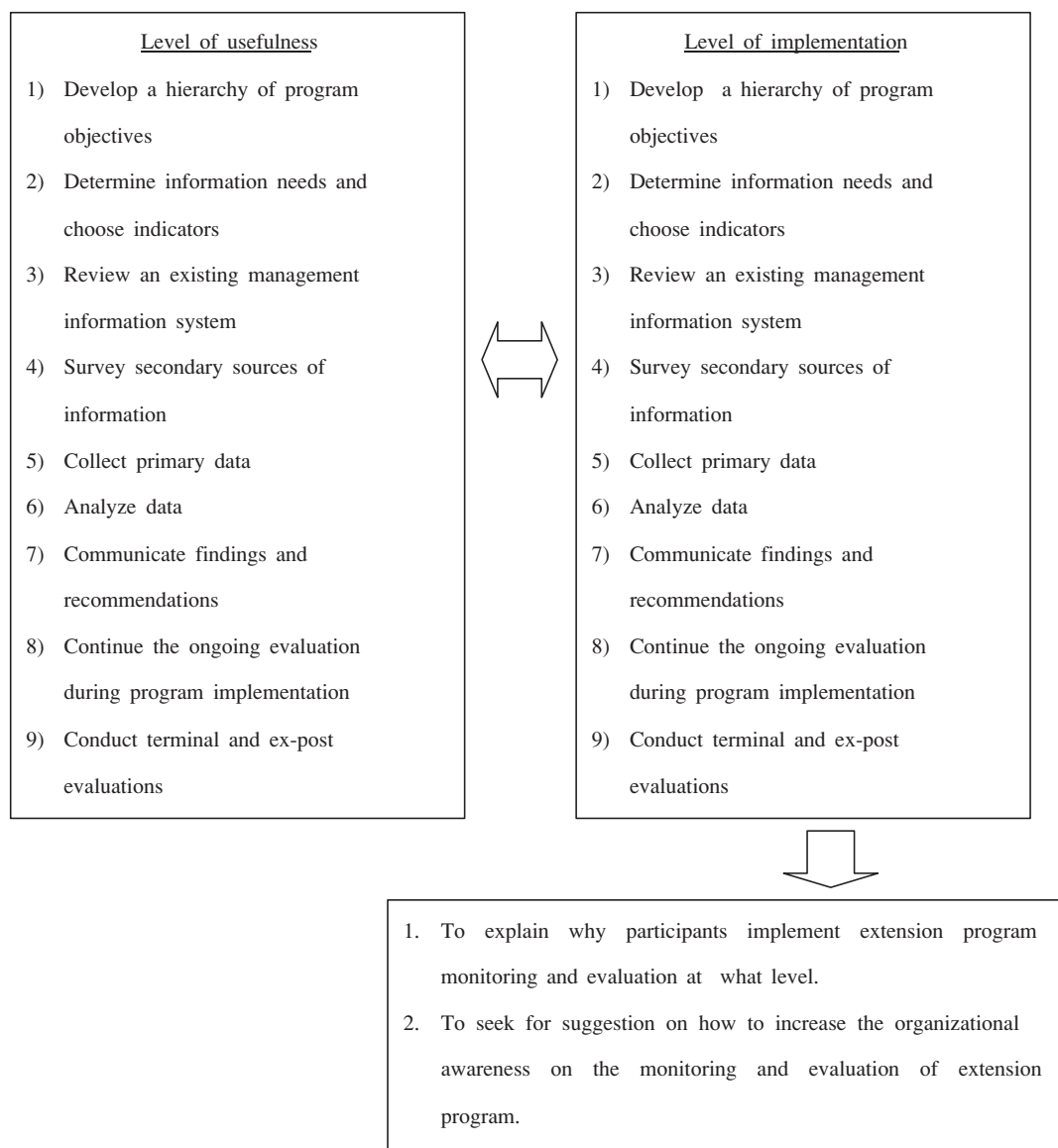


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Basic characteristics of trainees

Work position. From the total twenty-five trainees, twenty-one of them were fisheries officers and the other three were students and one control and finance officer as shown in table 1. Twenty- one trainees were: fisheries officer, fisheries inspector, fisheries biologist, deputy fisheries officer, extension

facilitator, fisheries extension, fisheries planning officer, fisheries social development officer, fisheries training officer, head of fisheries division, information and training & document officer, research of fishing technology, and senior fisheries officer.

Number of years working at present office.

Fourteen out of Twenty- five trainees indicated that they have been working at the present office ranging from one to nine years. The maximum years of

working were twenty- three. There was one student pointing out that she had no experience in extension program planning and evaluation. The average years of working at the present office were 9.12 years.

Working position directly involved with planning and evaluation of project / program.

There were fourteen participants explicitly indicated that they were getting involved with the extension program planning and evaluation. Eleven trainees, on the other hand, illustrated that they were not directly responsible to do the extension program planning and evaluation.

Comparison of participants' perceptions on the level of usefulness and level of implementation on the extension program monitoring and evaluation.

When considering seventeen steps in setting up a monitoring and evaluation of extension program, fourteen participants expressed their viewpoints that twelve items were perceived as more usefulness. Five items, however, were expressed as

moderate usefulness. On the contrary, ten items were valued as more implementation in their job responsibilities. Seven items were illustrated at the moderate level of implementation. Those items included:

- 1) Develop a hierarchy of program objectives, activities, processes, inputs, and outputs.
- 2) Review an existing management information system.

Table 2 Number of years working at present office.

Number of years	Number	Percent
0	1	4.0
1 - 9	14	56.0
10 - 18	6	24.0
19 - 23	4	16.0
Total	25	100.0

Max = 23 years

Min = 0 year

\bar{X} = 9.12 years

Table 1 Work position.

Position	Number	Percent
Fisheries officers		
- Deputy fisheries officer	1	4.0
- Extension facilitator	1	4.0
- Fisheries biologist	2	8.0
- Fisheries extension	1	4.0
- Fisheries inspector	3	12.0
- Fisheries officer	6	24.0
- Fisheries planning officer	1	4.0
- Fisheries social development officer	1	4.0
- Fisheries training officer	1	4.0
- Head of fisheries division	1	4.0
- Information, training & document officer	1	4.0
- Researcher of fishing technology	1	4.0
- Senior fisheries officer	1	4.0
Others		
- Student	3	12.0
- Control and finance of fishing market organization	1	4.0
Total	25	100.0

Table 3 Work position directly involved with planning and evaluation of extension project / program.

Directly involved with planning and evaluation	Number	Percent
Yes	14	56.0
No	11	44.0
Total	25	100.0

3) Collect primary data by using in- dept case study method.

4) Continue the on-going evaluation to evaluate the overall performance in program implementation.

5) Continue the on-going evaluation to assess whether the assumption in the program design are valid.

6) Evaluate after the completion of the program to assess its performance according to its plan.

7) Evaluate after the completion of the program to assess its organizational development including organization for program management, delivery services at the grass root level.

Reasons for moderate implementation of the extension program evaluation

Based upon the focus group discussions among the fisheries officers who directly involved with the program planning and evaluation in their responsibilities, they have expressed their viewpoints why they practiced program evaluation at the moderate level. Those explanation were as follows:

1. Inadequate staff members in doing the extension program evaluation

The fisheries officers expressed their concerns toward the inadequate staff members in doing the extension evaluation. Most of them, however, were professional fisheries officers who had minimum skills in evaluation. The lack of staff member in doing evaluation was their primarily concerns. Therefore, if they were trained in this field. It would be useful and be implemented in their work.

2. Limitation of resources such as budget and negligence of evaluation

The participants who were responsible for the evaluation, but did not receive enough budgets

to carry on the program evaluation signified this concern. They also expressed the limited numbers of program monitoring in their work place, which affected to the negligence of conducting the program evaluation.

3. Lack of organizational concerns

There were limited numbers of organization activities dealing with the extension program evaluation. Besides, the interest in doing the program evaluation seemed to be minimal. Most participants have mentioned that their government was not interested in the extension program evaluation. This explanation indicated the insufficient activities toward the program evaluation.

Suggestions on how to increase the organizational awareness on the importance of the extension program evaluation

There were two levels in stimulating the organization awareness on the importance of the extension program evaluation derived from the focus group discussions. Those were:

1. At the staff level Suggestions were as follows:

1.1) Conduct seminar, workshop, training for the staff members and relevant target groups on how to do the extension program evaluation.

1.2) Increase the working team to do the program evaluation.

1.3) Develop the joint venture among agencies concerned to assist doing the program evaluation.

1.4) Develop the program monitoring and program evaluation.

1.5) Prepare reports on the management performance by employing the evaluation techniques such as developing program objectives and determining, performance indicators.

Table 4 Perception of participants on level of usefulness and level of implementation of extension program monitoring and evaluation. N = 14

Level of usefulness						Steps in setting up monitoring and evaluation of extension program	Level of implementation					
Most	More	Moderate	Less	Least	\bar{X}		Most	More	Moderate	Less	Least	\bar{X}
5	4	3	2	1			5	4	3	2	1	
2	4	8	-	-	3.57	1. Developing a hierarchy of program objectives and determining critical activities, processes, inputs, and outputs.	1	4	8	1	-	3.36
2	6	6	-	-	3.71	2. Determining information needs and choosing indicators.	1	5	8	-	-	3.5
2	3	8	1	-	3.43	3. Reviewing the existing management information system.	3	2	6	3	-	3.36
1	7	6	-	-	3.64	4. Surveying secondary sources of information.	1	7	5	1	-	3.57
						5. Collecting primary data by						
1	4	7	1	1	3.21	5.1 observation	1	5	7	1	-	3.43
-	6	5	1	2	3.07	5.2 household sample	-	7	6	1	-	3.43
1	3	8	1	1	3.14	5.3 in-depth case studies	1	5	6	1	1	3.29
-	6	5	2	1	3.14	5.4 interview	1	6	5	2	-	3.43
						6. Analyzing the data						
2	7	3	2	-	3.64	6.1 to monitor progress	2	7	3	2	-	3.64
3	5	5	1	-	3.71	6.2 to identify problems	3	4	6	1	-	3.64
2	6	4	2	-	3.57	7. Communicating findings and recommendations by	3	8	2	1	-	3.93
						- submit findings to program manager						
						8. Conducting on-going evaluation during program implementation						
3	3	6	1	1	3.43	8.1 to evaluate the overall performance in program implementation	2	5	4	2	1	3.36
4	4	5	1	-	3.79	8.2 to assess whether program objectives being achieved	3	5	5	-	1	3.64
2	6	4	2	-	3.57	8.3 to assess whether the assumption in the program design are valid	1	4	7	1	1	3.21
						9. Terminal and ex-post evaluation is to evaluate after the completion of the program to assess						
1	5	6	2	-	3.36	9.1 its performance according to its plan	-	5	6	3	-	3.14
4	7	1	2	-	3.93	9.2 its impact in terms of economic, social and environment, etc.	2	7	3	2	-	3.64
3	6	4	1	-	3.79	9.3 its organization development including organization for program management, delivery services at grass root level.	1	5	5	2	1	3.21

2. At the organization level Suggestions included:

2.1) Indicate the evaluation activities in the organization's action plans.

2.2) Submit reports to high hierarchy on the continuous and progress of the on-going extension programs.

2.3) Build more cooperation between / among departments to do the program evaluation.

2.4) Seek for regular and special budget for the extension program evaluation.

2.5) Get attention and support from the government.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The research findings have illustrated the differences between perceptions of participants. Participants reportedly practice the extension program monitoring and evaluation at the moderate level even though they thought that the monitoring and evaluation were more useful. The better explanation of these phenomena were shown by their common agreements that the lack of staff members in conducting the extension program evaluation, the limitation of resources, and the lack of organization concerns were factors affecting their moderate implementation of extension program evaluation. Suggestions to stimulate the organization awareness on conducting the extension program evaluation should be at the staff and organization level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To develop the teaching and learning skills under the extension program evaluation courses, recommendations were as follows:

1. Put more emphases in doing program monitoring and evaluation in the lectures and field practices.

2. Encourage teamwork, group discussions and participation among participants to openly share their knowledge, skills, and experiences in doing monitoring and evaluation.

3. Conduct the follow-up study of twenty-five trainees, particularly fourteen participants who directly involved with the program planning and evaluation. The objective was to assess whether they have actually implemented what they have learned from the International Training Course in their work responsibilities. Also, whether they have expanded their experiences to their working staffs and gained support from their superior and organization.

The International Training Course in Coastal Fisheries and Extension Methodology would reach its objectives if trainees have implemented what they have learned in their job description.

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