

## **INTRODUCTION TO EXPERIENCES WITH INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION: RECONCILIATION OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES**

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### **1.INTRODUCTION**

It is important to cooperate with organizations undertaking studies on the impacts of noise pollution, a universal environmental problem. The objective is to make international efforts in order to have comparable results of the community response analyses which are not in fact economic, and to study the changes in annoyance degrees in comparison with social, cultural, geographical and other factors. The basis of cooperation between individual researchers and organisations and of joint contributions must be laid to realize this objective. This paper prepared upon the request of ICBEN Team 6, discusses the principles of cooperation in the scientific and academic world, as the observations of a person who, though not an expert of social psychology, has actively been involved with the implementation.

### **2.INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN ACADEMIC STUDIES**

International studies in general is a discipline which receives the close attention of especially political scientists, and international behaviour is also a topic of theoretical and empirical studies. International relations include psychological and socio-psychological aspects. Human dimensions carry weight in these relations. Attitudinal and personal factors play an important part especially in face-to-face contacts and interactions in and between groups. The interest and relations of individuals for a specific topic, for instance cooperation in academic subjects, are closely relevant to their general opinion and attitude for international relations.

The important aspects of international relations, which are focused on individual actors are: motivation, perception, trust and suspicion,

definition of the situation, stress, communication, leadership, influence, norm formation, role prescription, group cohesiveness and loyalty [1].

These factors are important also at the decision making phase of international relations. Psychological concepts need be put into practice at times of conflict and stress. Social psychology, which is interested in the intersections between individual behaviour and societal - institutional processes, bears great importance for international relations. It is known that in social interaction, persons try to influence the goals, images, expectations and values of each other. The important thing is to be ready for this type of international action. It is also important to show positive behaviour in problem solving, such as mutual reinforcement, meeting the expectations of certain reference groups, anticipating and evaluating the reactions of others, the requirement of achieving consensus. Harmonizations of academical relations is much easier and the results are more productive than the relations between countries, because the basic goal is to solve the common scientific problems for the interest of all parties. However some problems may arise in the projects carried on jointly. The probabal reasons are as follows:

- 1.Differences in objectives (incompatibility of the benefits to accrue and imbalance);
- 2.Differences in the method of running the project (time schedule, structure, details, financial problems, different opinions about the method to be used);
- 3.Problems arising from the characteristics and attitudes of the individuals and institutions, such as; social and cultural differences, differences of language, knowledge and experience; difference of the degree of responsibility of persons working jointly, difference of interest in the subject, difference of technological means, different expectations due to the differences of primary and secondary aims, financial restrictions and inequality in sharing the burden, problems arising from previous project identification or insufficient project definition, lack of comprehensive pre-detailing, failure of the countries in allocating sufficient time and personnel, and in giving meticulous attention to the programme.

Joint international studies can be conducted in two ways: They can be headed by a foreign researcher in a country with the support of local researchers; each country can research the part under its responsibility and from time to time meetings can be arranged for the purpose of coordination and exchange of information. The benefits to be derived from this type of work are naturally first; a. Mutual benefits: wider dissemination of knowledge; putting together ideas and efforts to jointly achieve the work which cannot be performed unilaterally; stimulating each other; integration of the ideas born from different points of vantage; and b. Obtaining comparable scientific results.

The motives for consenting to academic cooperation may vary according to individuals and institutions. Personal and institutional interests, for example, having access to some financial support, earning an academic

title, promoting the individual or the institution, comradeship and friendship relations, or purely scientific objectives. The pre-requisites carrying out joint scientific projects of academic studies are as follows:

1. Objective and mutual benefits must be well defined at the outset.
2. The objective and the joint program must be served faithfully.
3. The responsibilities must be clearly defined at the beginning.
4. The counterparts in the project must be at the same level (researcher - researcher or manager - manager)
5. There must be mutual and equal degree of enthusiasm and interest.
6. Preparations must be made completely and in full.
7. In cases where there is a difference of technology, knowledge and experience, it must be accepted that one party is in position to complement and instruct the other party.
8. There must be mutual respect, courtesy and an optimistic approach.
9. Different points of view and opinions must be regarded in good faith and problems must be solved by scientific ways.
10. A good organization must be established.
11. In case of problems, first individual approaches, then institutional and again individual commitment must be secured, there must be cooperation at every level: individual, technical and administrative.
12. Financial problems must be solved very carefully at the outset.
13. It is necessary to keep the promises and act honestly; real opportunities must not be hidden, but put forward clearly.

In joint undertakings sometimes it may be necessary for one party to shoulder the burden and for the other party to act in the capacity of advisor. In that case the clear decision must be made according to the contribution of academic products (publications). It may be difficult to provide the above conditions. In general, it is somehow difficult to have exactly the same objectives in the joint academic studies and to compose teams with equal knowledge and experience.

### **3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY REACTIONS TO NOISE**

The work performed by ICBEN, Community Response to Noise: Team 6, to use international cooperation in order to have comparable knowledge which is important to evolve an effective anti-noise policy, deserves appreciation. Guidelines for reporting core information from community noise surveys, prepared in advance and discussed at ICA 95 will be very helpful in having a consensus about the studies in this field, particularly, about the standard method to be used in the analyses and, if a consensus is also reached on the shared questions for evaluating the annoyance responses, an important step will have been taken in the field of community noise studies [2, 3]. However it must not be overlooked that one or two common questions would not be sufficient, that there must be integrity in the context and that all questionnaire forms to be used in the

studies which have the sole aim of investigating the community reactions to noise, must be standardized.

An important aspect of the community annoyance studies is that, although a consensus can be reached among the researchers on the above mentioned points, the social dimension of the problem needs be considered. In other words, pre-information is necessary about the community whose reactions to noise is going to be studied. This includes the customs, socio-cultural texture and degrees of differences, whether the people are accustomed to opinion surveys, their attitude about and interest in the subject, their reluctance or willingness, their national identity, complexes, sensitivity towards the environment, the importance they attach to words (using special terminology), suspicions towards the opinion surveyors, confidence or inconfidence in the government or the institutions making the survey, the existing political and economic stability of the country (stresses of the community), the priorities of the community. On the other hand, the respondents may avoid telling the truth on some issues, like their income. Therefore when joint studies are undertaken, the social structure must be carefully analyzed and explained to the other partner of the study. Consequently, consensus in preparing the above mentioned standard questionnaires is of utmost importance.

#### **4.EXPERIENCES**

This part of the paper provides information about the problems encountered during cooperative work undertaken abroad in an academic setting, the consensus reached, solidarity and solution of the problems.

The first study undertaken abroad was a laboratory study conducted in a university in the USA, titled "Scale Model for Traffic Noise Propagation"(1980) [4]. During the course of this research, which had the properties of a personal academic study, entailed all the difficulties and facilities faced by a foreigner during conducting a study in a foreign country. As bilateral relations between the researchers play a part in this type of work, the selection of the right advisor or coordinator to work in harmony was found to be very important. It has been observed that when a good dialogue is established initially and the support is well defined, when the researcher is sufficiently motivated and resolute in studying the issue to which he or she is committed, and accepts to work under alien conditions that sometimes do not fully fulfill the expectations, is reconciled to the conditions and is not pessimistic when faced with problems, positive results can be achieved. On the other hand, limited time, technical problems, the time spent in acquainting with the new measurement techniques, are situations that must be endured by the researcher and the sponsoring institution. Things go well, when the sponsoring institution acts in good faith, even if such institution is not basically interested in that particular study or even if that study is not in the ambit of the institution.

Trans European Motorway Project (1983): Turkey has contributed to this project supported by the United Nations and the EEC Transport Division and realized by the participation of ten countries, by making noise predictions and later by drawing up the standards comprising the measures to be taken for noise control. At the initial stage opinion surveys were made and opinions were elicited about the work carried on by the participating countries in their territories and with the purpose to determine the legal status. The reports were first debated at a technical level during the meetings of the researchers on noise pollution from various countries and later were approved and published by the public officials, road and traffic experts and the administrative personnel of ten countries under the auspices of the United Nations. [5,6]. The studies of the TEM Construction Noise, undertaken by Hungary parallel to this work, was later appended to the project and a joint TEM Noise Control Recommendation was written. A very positive attitude was displayed within the mutual friendly and courteous atmosphere of the UN meetings. As a result, the important thing from the UN part was to approve and to publish the document. However, as it was clearly stated that the participating countries would not probably implement this standard and it was not their responsibility to impose any obligations on their respective countries, the benefit expected from this study could not be fully accrued. On the other hand, it can be stated that the coordination meetings at the technical level, held with the participation of experts were more harmonious and productive.

The third research taking approximately ten months upon a fellowship of a Japanese Research Foundation, was a simulated-environment study on community noise response [7]. This research displayed an excellent example of solidarity between the university and the private sector, attracting great interest and enthusiasm for international cooperation. Technology and equipment in the possession of the one party, and the experience of the other party in the subject were the important elements of the work. The fact that the Japanese are extremely regular in their international relations, respectful and very industrious, that they are very tolerant, helpful and courteous towards university personnel, researchers and especially foreigners, was greatly instrumental in solving the problems encountered during the joint study. The foreigners, on their part, must give confidence, avoid any actions to cause inconfidence, have enthusiasm for the work, be consistent and resolute. Doubtless, it was also found here to be important to establish precious contact with the individuals and organization of the cooperation, to approach the problems in good faith and to find the partners in the joint work. Since the field studies are multidisciplinary, it would be needed to receive the suggestions of other experts and friendly relations play a significant part in this voluntary assistance extended with no regard for financial benefit. As a result, all difficulties were overcome and the research was concluded with one party fulfilling its obligations under the financial assistance it

received, and the other party fulfilling its promise. However, as in all other undertakings, the party initiating the research, carried the heaviest burden since it had shouldered the entire responsibility. Some of the observations during the course of this study might be worth to mention:

1. There were some difficulties in translating the questionnaires written in English into the Japanese language, particularly the term "annoyance".
2. It was found that the questions had to be very clear and intelligible by the subjects. The questions must be asked in such a way that no additional explanations on the part of the surveyor are necessary.
3. The language barrier between the researcher and the Japanese subjects was overcome with the help of interpreters of good faith.
4. Woman respondents were found to be generally more tolerant (less annoyed) during the survey. It might be likely due to the traditional role of women in the Japanese society.
5. The laboratory tests had to be given simultaneously but separately to groups of voluntary women and men. It was necessary to arrange similar groups of different genders, so that the elaborations of the results would not be based on the responses of only one gender.
6. Working men were observed to be extremely fatigued during the tests.
7. The voluntary respondents were found to go through the entire study with great sacrifice and respond to the questions very carefully.

## CONCLUSION

Joint projects to investigate community noise responses can be successfully undertaken and conducted when the general socio-psychological factors of the international relations are taken into consideration. There are examples of such cooperations from various countries. However, attention must be paid to certain principles for the solution of problems and securing mutual reconciliation. It can be stated that countries have different approaches to academic cooperation. Therefore, it is necessary to have international cooperation with the right persons and institutions. However, it may be said that the highest degree of harmony between the countries can be secured in the academic world.

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