

学位論文要旨

ESD Activities, Learning in Kominkan and Community Development:
a Study of the Factors Affecting Participation in the Learning
Activities of Kominkan

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis discusses Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and learning activities in kominkan and their contribution to community development. It also discusses participation in learning activities at kominkan, aiming to reveal the influencing factors.

Social education in Japan was chosen as a case for studying ESD and learning activities because Japan was one of the first countries to introduce ESD activities in the context of non-formal and social education. Furthermore, learning activities in kominkan, as a social education facility, have a marked affinity for community development. Moreover, community development is an expected result of participation in non-formal ESD activities. Therefore, social education has a good setting for conducting the current research.

The first aim of the current thesis is to clarify the relationship between learning activities in kominkan that are titled "ESD activities" and those that are not, and to highlight their contribution to community development. The thesis's second aim is to identify how learning activities in kominkan are influencing community development.

A primary concern of social education is participation in its learning activities. Participation in these learning activities aims to develop the capacity of individuals and communities, strengthen bonds across generations, and foster social cohesion (UIL, 2017). Since the 1990s, studies on participation in learning activities have evolved, as personal and activity factors are increasingly investigated (Courtney, 2019). Courtney (1994), Fuwa (2001), Parnham (2001), Bariso (2008), Boeren (2017), and Hovdhaugen and Opheim (2018) all made significant contributions to the study of participation in learning activities. Still, little is known about factors that affect participation in the learning activities of kominkan. Therefore, the thesis's third aim is to clarify factors affecting participation in the learning activities of kominkan.

The ESD activities of non-formal education are as important as the ESD activities of formal education. It is widely acknowledged that ESD activities promoted solely in formal education cannot achieve sustainable development; thus, many researchers emphasize the potential of ESD activities in non-formal education (Noguchi, 2010; Maruyama, 2011; Sasai, 2013; Abe, 2014; Didham & Ofei-Manu, 2015). While this was a challenge for formal education, it opened up niches for non-formal education generally and social education, in particular, to fill, highlighting their role in promoting sustainability and development.

ESD was studied mainly in the field of school education. It is necessary to study the function of learning activities in kominkan because sustainability is currently an essential theme in the field of non-formal and social

education. Yet, the research articles on this theme are produced so unsystematically that there is no overall picture of them. Therefore, it is necessary to organize the trends of sustainability research in non-formal education by reviewing articles in specialized journals. The review will be presented in detail in Chapter 2, “Education for Sustainable Development in the Context of Non-Formal Education,” of the present thesis.

Additionally, the previous studies that examined ESD and learning activities in kominkan provided neither characteristics nor classification to distinguish between them (Abe, 2014; JNCU, 2015; Rogers, 2019a). ESD activities are expected to share the same aims and content as learning activities in kominkan. The current thesis hypothesizes that the difference between ESD and other learning activities in kominkan is only nominal. It views ESD activities in kominkan as a form of kominkan learning activities. This assumption will be examined in detail in Chapter 3, “ESD and Learning Activities for Community Development: the Case of Kominkan,” of the present thesis.

Now the discussion turns towards learning in kominkan. Learning activities in kominkan show variety and diversity. Some previous studies reported that kominkan activities differed from one community to another based on their learning needs (Inoue, 2015; Kawano, Matsuda & Xiao, 2016). The categories of learning activities in kominkan are explained in detail in the third chapter of the current thesis.

Similar to learning activities in kominkan, participation in these activities may vary from one community to another. Some previous studies in non-formal education connected this variance to some factors such as motivation and social participation (Courtney, 2019; Lee, 2019). It is clear that there are some factors that might promote or inhibit participation in learning activities in kominkan.

Kominkan activities have been investigated to a certain extent so far. However, the factors affecting participation in learning activities in kominkan received little attention. Therefore, the current thesis examines the effective factors in detail in Chapter 4, “Understanding Participation in the Learning Activities of Kominkan.”

As for research questions, it is needed to examine the influence of learning activities in kominkan on community development and clarify the factors affecting participation in these activities. But first, it is important to review the themes and approaches of research on non-formal education for sustainability. Henceforward, the research questions are:

- Preliminary Research Question (PRQ): What are the current research approaches and themes for non-formal learning activities for sustainability?

- Research Question 1 (RQ1): What is the relationship between learning activities in kominkan that are titled “ESD activities” and those that are not titled “ESD activities” in relation to community development?
- Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do learning activities in kominkan influence community development?
- Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are the common factors that influence participation in the learning activities of kominkan?

As for the hypotheses of the present study, it hypothesizes that participation in learning activities of kominkan, even in different social contexts (i.e., urbanized and rural areas), promotes community development. It also hypothesizes that personal, activity and kominkan environment factors affect participation in the learning activities of kominkan.

As for the research approach in use, although the research on the current theme depends principally on qualitative analyses to achieve its goals, it is essential to provide quantitative-based evidence to validate research results and contribute to the variance of research approaches studying this theme. Therefore, the current thesis uses a mixed-method approach to achieve its goals and overcome the limitations of the sole employment of a qualitative or quantitative approach.

It uses a multiple case study approach, which comprises collecting and analyzing data from several cases in order to enhance the external validity and generalizability of findings (Merriam, S. B., 1998). A qualitative-based analysis is employed to discuss the influence of learning activities in kominkan on community development. Additionally, a quantitative-based analysis is employed to investigate the factors affecting participation in learning activities at kominkan to visualize these factors clearly. This mixed-method approach will contribute to enriching the approaches to study social education and guide the direction of future research towards mixed-method studies.

As for research significance, this thesis makes a theoretical contribution to the literature on social education, ESD, and learning activities in kominkan. The findings of this study are expected to be crucial in promoting participation in kominkan learning activities. The research findings will contribute to formulating a comprehensive picture of the factors affecting participation in learning activities in kominkan. The findings will also highlight the relationship between learning in kominkan and community development.

As for the logical structure of the thesis, firstly, it proposes a relationship between participation in learning activities in kominkan and the factors affecting it. The thesis examines the influence of personal, activity-related, and environment-related factors on participation in learning activities in kominkan. Secondly, it proposes a

relationship between participation in learning activities in kominkan and both community development and sustainability. Participation in learning activities in kominkan results in some outcomes that promote community development. Learning in kominkan builds the competencies of participants, promotes social participation and socialization among them, promotes networking with NGOs and NPOs of the local community, and builds the experience of participants through transforming their perspective. Maintaining the community's resources and reinforcing the outcomes of participation in learning activities in kominkan will result in the sustainable development of the community.

As for the thesis structure, it consists of an introduction (Chapter 0), along with five chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the history of social education in post-war Japan. It highlights both the observed and expected functions of kominkan and its human resources. Chapter 2 discusses the history of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ESD and reviews research articles on non-formal education for sustainability, defining themes and approaches of research on ESD in the context of social education. Chapter 3 introduces case studies from Hiroshima city and Okayama city to examine the differences between kominkan activities that are titled "ESD activities" and those that are not, in relation to promoting sustainable development. Chapter 4 studies the common factors affecting participation in the learning activities of kominkan. Lastly, Chapter 5 discusses the conclusions and implications of the current thesis.

CHAPTER 1. LEARNING IN KOMINKAN IN POST-WAR JAPAN

This chapter aims to provide an overview of kominkan, its history, function, and human resources. The structure of this chapter is organized as follows; Section 2 discusses the history of learning in kominkan. Section 3 discusses both the observed and expected functions of kominkan. Section 4 provides insights into the staff members of kominkans and their responsibilities.

CHAPTER 2. EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

This chapter discusses ESD in the context of non-formal and social education, highlighting the historical development and importance of sustainable development. It aims to reveal the approaches and themes of research on ESD in the context of non-formal and social education.

The structure of this chapter is organized as follows. Sections 2 and 3 discuss the history of SDGs and ESD, and section 4 discusses the context of non-formal education and sustainable development. Section 5 provides a review of non-formal education for sustainability.

CHAPTER 3. ESD AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF KOMINKAN

This chapter discusses the relationship between learning activities in kominkan that are titled "ESD activities" and those that are not. It also studies the influence of learning activities in kominkan on the development and sustainability of local communities. It provides arguments for the ideal kominkan in relation to promoting sustainability and development. Then it provides case studies from two Japanese cities to examine RQ1 and RQ2.

This chapter consists of six sections. Section 2 discusses the sustainable development of the community in relation to learning activities in kominkan. Then it builds a model of the impact of learning activities in kominkan on community development. Section 3 provides the context for the case studies. This chapter also provides the results of data analyses (section 4) and a discussion of the findings (section 5). Finally, it provides conclusions in section 6.

CHAPTER 4: UNDERSTANDING PARTICIPATION IN THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES OF KOMINKAN

Kominkan activities have been investigated to a certain extent so far. However, the factors affecting participation in learning activities in kominkan received little attention. Therefore, this chapter examines factors influencing participation in learning activities in kominkan (personal attitudes, activity attitudes, motivation, activity-related social interactions, kominkan staff support, and kominkan learning environment). It seeks to answer RQ3.

This chapter comprises an introduction along with five sections. Section 2 discusses participation in learning activities for adult learners through the lens of major theories and ideas of adult education, and then it reflects on the field of social education generally and learning in kominkan particularly (section 3). Section 4 discusses the factors affecting participation in kominkan activities, and section 5 reports the quantitative research. Lastly, section 6 concludes this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter includes the research findings and implications. The current research provides some contributions to the study on learning activities in kominkan. It consists of a brief overview of research findings, followed by the conclusion of this thesis and some implications.

The findings of the current thesis revealed the factors affecting participation in the learning activities of kominkan. It also revealed the relationship between learning in kominkan and community development. It concluded that there were no significant differences between kominkan activities that are titled "ESD activities" and those that are not. This chapter provides some implications.