DYNAMIC STRATEGIC MODEL OF STANDARDS INNOVATION AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY OF HUMAN LIFE

BONIFACE MHELLA

Senior lecturer, St. Augustine University of Tanzania
E-mail: bmhella@yahoo.com

Abstract - The dynamic strategic model of standards innovation (DSMSI) I am proposing here can be defined as a long term development plan to improve the quality of human life through innovation of standards of products and services offered in the market. The focus is on those standards that improve condition, processes, products and services utilized in poor societies with the aim of improving the quality of life of people and their societies. Standards like any development instrument can bring either development or underdevelopment to people, depending on how they are formulated, imposed and enforced. This means, if we want to bring development to people, then a good strategic management of standards must be recognized. Good standards must be designed reflecting the actual situation on the ground of a developing society in need. Actually, developing countries are supposed to design dynamic standards that change in relation to the changes of quality of human life, rather than having static standards that never change in time. This is the reason why this paper discusses the DSMSI to ensure a better strategic management of standards, preventing over expectation that in reality cannot be achieved when enforcing a standard. This will make a standard innovation inspire development processes, making technicians and technocrats strive for further achievement, instead of despair. Three are the most important subject matters to be discussed here: 1) the setting of dynamic standards, 2) the communication of a standard to stakeholders, 3) the evaluation and control of achievements of a standard.

Keywords - Standard innovation strategic management human life

I. INTRODUCTION

The dynamic strategic model of standards innovation (DSMSI) I am proposing here can be defined as a long term development plan to improve the quality of human life through innovation of standards of product and services offered in the market place. The focus is on those standards that improve condition, processes, products and services utilized in poor societies with the aim of improving the quality of life of people and their societies. Standards like any development instrument can bring either development or underdevelopment to people, depending on how they are formulated, imposed and enforced. This means, if we want to bring development to people, then a good strategic management of standards must be recognized. Good standards must be designed reflecting the actual situation on the ground of a developing society in need. Actually, developing countries are supposed to design dynamic standards that change in relation to the changes of quality of human life, rather than having static standards that never change in time. This is the reason why this paper discusses the DSMSI to ensure a better strategic management of standards, preventing over expectation that in reality cannot be achieved when enforcing a standard. This will make a standard innovation inspire development processes, making technicians and technocrats strive for further achievement, instead of despair. Three are the most important subject matters to be discussed here: 1) the setting of dynamic standards, 2) the communication of a standard to stakeholders, 3) the evaluation and control of achievements of a standard.

II. SETTING OF DYNAMIC STANDARDS

The setting of dynamic standards requires the understanding of three basic concepts. The first regards the relationship between the quality of standards and quality of human life. The second regards the projection of quality of standards. The third is on the projection of quality of human life.

2.1 Quality of Standards and Quality of Human Life

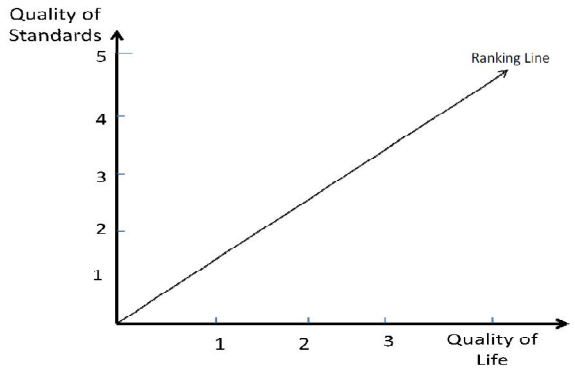
The quality of human life refers to all multifaceted dynamic conditions of living that signal an advancement of wellbeing of people and their societies. This is because the ultimate aim that most scholars have in mind when comes to development is to see there is an improvement in the quality of human life in the society. Whether it is the income creation[1], employment creation[2], poverty reduction[3], rights[4], freedom[5], and so on, all these may mean nothing if they do not improve the quality of life of individual persons and their societies in general.[6]

[1] This is the goal of most scholars belonging to the neoclassical school of thoughts.
[2] This belong to Keynesian school of thoughts.
[3] Written extensively by Jeffrey Sachs (2005).
[4] Written extensively by William Easterly (2013).
[5] Written extensively by Amartya Sen (1999)
[6] I have discussed this in length in another article called: 'Development as innovation of standards in the market place'. The article will be presented in the Pretoria conference of TheIIER, October 25-26 2018.Paper ID: II-SSEJOHAN-25108-13079.

The term quality of standards, instead, refers to the totality of features and characteristics of an approved model that express the level of satisfaction of stated or implied needs[7]. In other words, as it is for the purpose of this paper, it refers to the totality of features and characteristics of goods and services that can express the meaning of a good quality of human life. This includes those standards created by technicians and technocrats of different specialization with the aim of improving the quality of human life.

As it can be seen on the graph below, the y-axis represents quality of standards varying from low to high. The greater the number, the higher is the quality of a standard. This means that if a standard is ranked to be number 5 on the y-axis its quality should be higher compared to the one ranked number 2 on y-axis.

The graph showing the relationship between improvement of quality of standards and improvement of quality of life



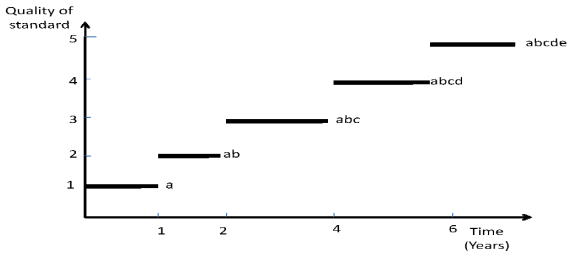
Now, imagine a company XYZ is specialized in selling of product X across the country. The quality of product sold in different branches may not be the same due to market segmentation and price discrimination. Provided the company has designed products of lower quality, let us say of level 2, to be sold in rural areas compared to a product of level 5 to be sold in towns, the quality of life provided by the utility a product X in rural areas shall be lower compared to the one of level 5 utilized in towns. This means that standardization of a quality of a product have a direct impact to the utility of a product and eventually on the quality of life of a consumer if the indicator used for quality of human life is based on the maximization of utility function. Hence, it is expected that an improvement of the quality of life of consumers in rural areas can only be realized if company XYZ decides to sell products of higher qualities in the rural areas and only when the citizens in the rural areas afford the products and maximize the utility function of these products. Innovators of standards should ask themselves the modality into which the changing of quality of standards is related to the changing of quality of life when setting standards that should improve the quality of life of people and their societies.

[7] The term 'quality' has many other meanings. See Hoyle (2007) for further definitions.

2.2 Projection of Quality of Standard

The second concept of a DSMSI that must be understood by innovators of standards has to do with the projection of quality of standard in a period of time. To set a standard that improves the quality of human life requires the understanding of the timing of a standard to be enforced. Innovators of standards may have a clear vision of a quality of a standard the society should adapt and live in, however, they may have a problem of projecting the time to introduce, enforce and probably withdraw it. This is because, in many occasions, different classes of people in the society tend to respond differently to any proposed new standard, and it is a duty of a standard setter to predict the response on the ground. Some of people totally resist changes, and will do whatever then can to repel the new standard. At the same time, in some cases, a new standard might be cheeredup by people but its rapid adaptationmay cause chaos and instability to the same people. For example, consider the fact that innovators of standards have identified an optimal standard at level 5 which is the highest on the following graph below.

A graph on the projection of standards



Such a standard of a product contains more elements-abcde- compared to lower standards, let us say a standard at level 2 which contain only element a and b. However, innovators of standards know well that it will take up to six years for the society to peacefully settle in a quality of standard of level 5. In such cases, standard innovators may decide to introduce achievable elements of a standard bit by bit, until all abcde elements are achieved over time. This means that, provided the society is living on Level 1 standard which contain only element a today, Level 2 standard can be introduced enforced after a year, then next year another Level 3 standards will be introduced and enforced, and so on as it can be seen on the graph above.

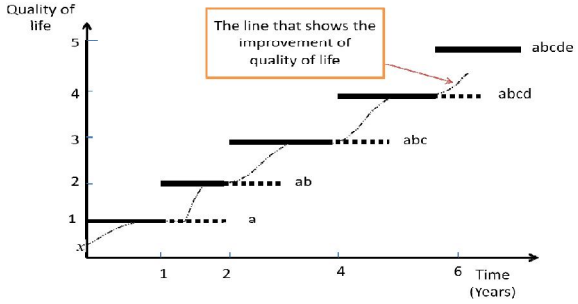
Think about the antismoking campaigns which have as a long term goal to have a 'smoke-free society'.

Most of the activists in this field know for sure that they will achieve this goal one day.However not soon. The ideal strategy they are using today is to impose a bit by bit additional restrictions to smoking by introducing various measures such as consumer taxes, minimum age for cigarette purchases, restrictions on smoking in public spaces both indoors and outdoors, and so on. Each of these measures have been introduced and enforced by law a bit by bit because a hasty ban of smoking today is opposed by a significant fraction of the society.

2.3 Projection of Quality of Human Life

The projection of quality of a standard to be introduced and enforced in the society must go hand by hand with the projection of quality of human life expected. This is because, and as I have already argued above, a change in quality of standards has an impact to the change ofquality of human life. When there is an introduction of a new standard, innovators of standards must keep in mind the respective projection of changes of quality of human life. This is the reason why in the following graph below I have included a line that shows the improvement of quality of life in respect to improvement of quality of standards. Let us imagine at time zero, a new standard is introduced on product containing 'a' utility which is also an indicator of quality of life. As it can be seen, this standard is set above the quality of utility at time zero (the x sign). The enforcement of this standard is expected to continue for a year allowing companies to strive to produce products of standard a utility. Upon the end of the first year, a higher standard with 'ab' utility will be introduced. This will make those who havealready qualified for the standard a to continue striving for standard ab, while those who failed to meet 'a' standard should close. It is expected that by the end of second year, all the businesses which do not meet standard a will be completely closed and will cease to exist. And those who met the requirement of standard a will be given a year to improve the quality of a product, to live up to standard ab. Such a projection of standards and human life reveals a dynamic strategy model of standards setting to be used in the development of people and their societies.

The projection of quality of life in relation to quality of standard in time period



Just to give another example. Imagine the standard innovator working in Town X decides to raise the quality of restaurants in the city to eliminate completely the possibility of citizens getting typhoid and cholera diseases when purchasing food in any restaurant. The minimum standard for an investment to call itself 'RESTAURANT' is set to satisfy qualities of products and services offered within such a market. Since the standard innovator of Town X knows the fact that many investments that call themselves restaurants today do not qualify for such a name, he can decide to offer a period of transition of 6 years, introducing bit by bit changes every year. Standard 'a' is set on the first year to be achieved after a year. This means that by the end of year 1, all those who will not qualify will be preventedfrom calling themselves a restaurant. While for those who will qualify will be granted a one year license, with conditions that they have to strive to meet conditions set by a list of standard'b' on top of a list 'a'qualities. A year after, the same will be done. Those who do not qualified for 'ab' list will be denied a restaurant license. Only those who qualify shall proceed but knowing that they have to adapt a list of qualities 'c' if they want to continue to operate as a restaurant in the future. If such a model is applied, the changes of quality of services and products offered in the restaurant will end up improving the quality of life of customers and will guarantee trust and consumer satisfaction onthe services offered.

III. COMMUNICATION OF STANDARDS TO STAKEHOLDERS

Inventing a new standard and its qualities may be an easy thing, because it can be realized in the office of any person. However, in its implementation, a standard may face resistance from a significant number of members of the society. This is the reason why I encourage a good research to be done when setting a new standards. Stakeholders' engagement in standard setting is sometimes necessary, unless innovators of standards want to drag and coerce the rest of the population to do what it is predetermined paternalistically. Think about this situation. Certain ethical experts have designed a medical standard to recognize the right to life to all people. This means that the patient can be sued if he or she refuses to receive life-sustaining treatments. But what if according to the patient intrinsic values his future life is not worth living. So he refuses the treatment. Will the decision to sue such a patient relevant to him, when already he has nothing to lose on his life? Of course, it is a dilemma when a patient's standard of quality life differs from the one of the standard setter. Many standards are designed with all enthusiasm only to end up on bookshelves because stakeholders refuse them. A resistance to accept a new standard is technically an emotional and behavioral response by the affected stakeholders to real or anticipated threats

posed by the standard. Nothing can be successfully enforced, unless a significant number of members of the society consider it useful. Hence, before a standard is introduced, a particular communication should be conveyed to convince the society that such a new standard poses no threat to them. Such communication can come in different forms of social and public communication. Even special training to key stakeholders is a necessary form of communication. There is no other way to improve the quality of life of people and their societies, if the targeted people are not ready to accept changes.

A good standard innovator must understand the fact that effective communication is regarded as highly important in the successful adaptation of change, because it is used as a tool for announcing, explaining and preparing people for both the positive and negative effects of enforcing change. If the resistance to adapt new changes is a result of irrationality among people, then a careful communication should be designed to steer the society away from incorrect decisions without denying them their rights of expression and other human rights.

IV. EVALUATION AND CONTROL OF ACHIEVEMENTS

The fact that the standard has been well invented and has well engaged all the stakeholders and has been well communicated and accepted by the society do not mean that it will be successful when enforced. One can enforce something, only to find out the results betray all that he or she believed in. Certain conformity assessment procedures—also seen as evaluation and control procedures[8]— must be introduced and applied as the enforcement of the standard continue. The conformity assessment procedures are technical or technocratic procedures such as testing, verification, inspection and certification which confirm that the actual results on the ground are in conformity with the laid achievable standards in time and space. In other words, this is the process of cross checking whether the projected quality of human life is realized successfully as the standard is enforced. The enforcement of a standard needs regular evaluation and control in order for a standard innovator to have appropriate feedback in the determination of whether the chosen standards is still stimulating people to strive for the best. Once a standard enforcer realizes that the improvement of standard is positively related to the improvement of quality of human life, then he can proceed with its enforcement as it is projected. But when he sees a negative relationship between the improvement of standards and improvement of quality of life, a rethinking in the entire standard become unavoidable.

[8]Different fields of operation may have different terminologies to describe the evaluation and control. For example in accounting the terminology commonly used is ‘variance analyses.

CONCLUSION

As the conclusion of this paper, it is wiser to remember that in order to speed up development in the poor countries and improve the quality of human life we must set dynamic standards rather than static standards. Dynamic standards should be able to change in time and space in relation to the change of quality of human life and should be managed strategically.That is the reason why the DSMSI presented in this paper serves the purpose.

REFERENCE

[1] Easterly, William (2013). The Tyranny of experts, Basic Books, NY.
[2] Hoyle, David (2007), Quality Management Essentials, Elsevier, UK.
[3] Mhella, Boniface ‘Development as innovation of standards in the market place’. The article will be presented in the Pretoria conference of TheIIER, October 25-26 2018.Paper ID: II-SSEJOHAN-25108-13079.
[4] Sachs, Jeffrey (2005), The end of poverty, Penguin group.
[5] Sen, Amartya K. (1999), Development as freedom, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

★★★