



ISSN: 0976-3031

Available Online at <http://www.recentscientific.com>

CODEN: IJRSFP (USA)

International Journal of Recent Scientific Research
Vol. 9, Issue, 12(A), pp. 29800-29803, December, 2018

**International Journal of
Recent Scientific
Research**

DOI: 10.24327/IJRSR

Research Article

RECONFIGURING THE METHODOLOGIES USED IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCHES: STUDY ON PRAXIS INTERVENTION STRATEGY

Sunitha L F

Department of Economics, University College, Trivandrum

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2018.0912.2933>

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 13th September, 2018
Received in revised form 11th
October, 2018
Accepted 8th November, 2018
Published online 28th December, 2018

Key Words:

Self- reflection, facilitator, critical
Facilitation.

ABSTRACT

Praxis intervention is a methodological innovation. It believes in developing new paradigms of creative expression. These paradigms are such that challenges the unexplored era of mindsets, which form the voice of the mass and at times become a means of objective discrimination. The term has emerged to counter such mind sets and evolve with innovative means in achieving democratized development processes. It believes that any development process should bring security in society and security redefined as ecological sustainability, social equity and economic efficiency.

This method takes participatory Action Research a step further and works on the 'participants' (i.e., everyone involved in the study, including initiators, funders etc.) to reflexively work on their respective 'mentalities', in other words, develop a self-critical awareness (not just enacting change on the external world). This is based on Marx's notion of 'false consciousness' and is thought to be a possible way out of such a state. If false consciousness does not know or ignoring the ideological control that capitalism keeps in place, praxis intervention can wake us up and shake us in to consciousness.

Copyright © Sunitha L F, 2018, this is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

INTRODUCTION

The word "praxis" is derived from the Greek word for "action", it refers not only to what one does, but also to how one thinks about what one and others do. In this sense praxis is intimately concerned with learning and reflection. By thinking about what one does in practice, one does more than just accumulate knowledge. It gives emphasis to the reflection of one's idea in to another individual or community. In this sense praxis intervention has wider application. As Karl Marx noted, praxis is an active and interdependent process which links the human mind with the external world through activity with others.

Praxis is the process by which a theory, lesson or skill is enacted, practised, embodied or realized. Praxis may also refer to the act of engaging, applying, exercising, realizing or practising ideas. This has been discussed in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Immanuel Kant, Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Marx, Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt, Paulo Freire and many others.

The epistemological stance of Praxis is that of a bridge between theory and practice. It is often thought that it is the process of reflection that brings theory to light, but reflection's effect on practice may remain stagnant without actuation in the form of praxis. Thus, praxis can be particularized by its interactive

nature. Its interactive nature, in turn, leads to its focus on that which is contemporaneous and critical.

Praxis is as much concerned, then, with reflection in the here-and-now as it is with reflection before or after the experience. In the midst of performance, one learns to reframe unanticipated problems in order to see experience differently. For example, in the middle of a planning meeting, a team member might offer an image, use of humor to describe a puzzling feature, attempt to bring out someone's prior opinion, or turn a problem upside down to free up the team to consider some new approaches.

Praxis intervention aims to stimulate a kind of mindful self-awareness in both 'researcher' and 'researched', unsettling all parties prior assumptions and norms by making those norms articulated and observable for comparison (Giddens, 1984; Bordieu, 1993) Thorne and Hayes (1997) simply defined praxis as knowledge and action. Freire (2003, p.79) describes praxis as "the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it." It is time for development of praxis theory, which links knowledge, values regarding empowerment, and practice that enacts those values to help transform a community.

*Corresponding author: **Sunitha L F**

Department of Economics, University College, Trivandrum

Praxis places attention on three essential tasks of the learner. The method can be used in two different manners :a reflexive and a non-reflexive one. The non-reflexive praxis is used to create a routine mechanism that is operating within the students frame of mind. Used in a reflexive manner, the method aims at provoking participants to unsettle their settled mindsets and to have a fresh look at the world around and intervene. In this sense, praxis intervention method helps members struggling against structurally deep-rooted discriminations. Within the process of praxis intervention, first listen to expert's opinions, explanations and demonstrations of the phenomenon under discussion. In the next phase, they would carry out experiments and exercises relevant to the topic or to the domain, conducted individually, collectively and collaboratively, under the expert's guidance. The results of this phase should be discussed and clarified with each other and also with the expert.

Methodological Principles of Praxis Intervention

Praxis is a science of individual persons rather than a science of people as a collective whole

Praxis, is a science of the unique and takes as its starting point the observation by the poet W.H. Auden (1967/1990) that "as persons, we are incomparable, unclassifiable, uncountable, irreplaceable"(p. 6). Thus praxis is a science of individual persons rather than a science of people as a collective whole.

Many of the qualitative social science methodologies purpose is to study individuals, most are concerned ultimately with generalizing or categorizing the findings to a wider population or to a general theory. The methodologies employed in Praxis are concerned primarily with unique individual cases and no attempt is made to move from the specific to the general.

Praxis places the practitioner –researcher at the heart of the research process

Many social science research methodologies is described as practitioner-based, as they include practitioners in the research process, perhaps collecting data or administering treatment interventions, praxis methodologies involve the practitioner-researcher in the critical analysis of some aspects of the own practice. Praxis methodologies are therefore not merely practitioner-based but might be better described as practitioner-centered.

Praxis entails not only reflectivity but also reflexivity

Reflection –in-action, in its most advanced form, involves a cyclical process of assessing the current situation, formulating a hypothesis, testing it through practical interventions and reevaluating the situation in the light of the intervention (Schon, 1983). This experimental cycle is conducted in the midst of the practice by the practitioner-researcher as part of everyday *modus operandi*; it is, a way of doing research. As a cyclical process, reflection-in –action is both continuous and continual. Reflection-in-action might therefore be regarded as the most fundamental and widely used methodology of praxis.

4. The experimental approach described is common to all of the methodologies employed in praxis

Action research, defined by Lewin (1948), "proceeds in a series of steps each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action (p.206). In all cases, practitioner-researchers experiment with their

practice by conducting a series of systematic and controlled treatment or caring interventions, which are then modified or revised according to what Lewin referred to above as "fact finding about the result of the action.

Objectives of Praxis intervention as a Technique

1. Help to gain a large quantity of quality knowledge within short periods of time.
2. Explore learner's potential to reflexively work on their respective mentalities and attitudes.
3. Produce within learners a moment of dialectic change, guiding them through an exploration process of ideas and beliefs with the tools of rationality.

Features of Praxis intervention method

A specificity of the praxis method is that learners are gaining knowledge through a process of creative appropriation rather than indoctrination or authoritarian transmission.

Praxis can be successfully used both in the development of professional skills-from management to engineering and medicine-and for interventions at the group or community level, designed to act upon individual's and groups behaviors, attitudes and beliefs.

Application of praxis intervention method in Non-formal and Informal contexts

Praxis, as a reflexive method, can be successfully used to address problems raised by various social and cultural contexts. Working with marginalized people-people discriminated on the basis of gender, ethnic origins, and sexual orientation or religious practices or people at the risk of exclusion for economic and social reasons-and/or working on topics related to marginalization and discrimination. The praxis method in these contexts must be sensitive towards the differences existing between participants in terms of their group and individual stories; also attention must be paid to the interaction settings, spatial positioning and all the elements that are creating the process framework. In this type of process, both participants and facilitators need to be self-reflexive and self-critical.

Data Collection in Praxis intervention strategy

Data collection is not a passive process but rather is conducted "with", "of" and "for" community. There is a cycle of planning, acting and observing the process and potential consequences of change, and then reflecting on these processes and consequences, leading to more planning, acting and reflection (Freire, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). As individuals and groups became aware of issues through the research process, they began to address these issues.

Role of the Researcher

A researcher's philosophic stance determines what will be studied as well as the framework for data collection and analysis (Munhall, 2001). The researcher provides Knowledge about conducting research and access to resources that may not be known to the community. It is important for the researcher to remain systematic in the approach and stay focused, on some level the researcher becomes a member of the group.

Learning Teams

The principal vehicle for participating in praxis is the learning team. Learning teams assemble practitioners who wish to slow down sufficiently to reflect together on their individual and team goals. Learning team members may choose to meet exclusively as a self-contained team or could choose to occasionally meet as a learning team while concurrently participating together in another team capacity, such as a project team.

Learning teams can form as adjuncts to formal training and development programs or as spontaneous communities of practice. Although their derivation is subject to debate, they likely got their start as intrinsic components of action learning programs. Thus, it is important, prior to offering any further description of learning teams, to say a word about action learning.

In a typical action learning program, a series of presentations constituting programmed instruction might be given on a designated theory or theoretical topic. In conjunction with these presentations, participants might be asked to apply their prior and new knowledge to a real project that is sanctioned by organizational sponsors and has potential value not only to the participant but also to the organization.

Throughout the program, the participants work on their projects with feedback and assistance from other participants as well as from qualified facilitators. This feedback feature principally occurs in learning teams or "sets", typically composed of 5-7 participants who hold intermittent meetings over a fixed program cycle. During the learning team sessions, the participants discuss not only the practical dilemmas arising from actions in their work settings, but also the application or misapplication of concepts and theories to these actions.

The Role of Facilitation

It is considered axiomatic in nearly all group settings that facilitators not impose their will on a group; after all, the name "facilitator" suggests that the role is to help the group help itself, not to provide "right and wrong" answers. Under praxis conditions, where the goal of the experience is ultimately to learn, there are special considerations that apply to the facilitator's role.

Learning to learn

In a learning team environment, facilitators will tend to rely on the group members to offer suggestions to one another, rather than solve their problems for them. However, facilitators do provide resource suggestions and advice on learning how to learn. Referred to as "second-order learning", this learning takes the learner out of a context or frame of reference. Instead of teaching about finance, the facilitator offers ways of learning how to learn finance. Practitioners also learn how to use third-order learning – in which case they might challenge existing assumptions and beliefs in order to come up with new theories about financial systems. Facilitator also encourage participants to question their own values and assumptions. Finally, facilitators can provide alternative ways to frame the subjects of enquiry, in other words, how to look at things differently. In this way, they encourage the group to maintain a healthy

appraisal of alternatives, thus avoiding the dreaded groupthink, made famous by Jani's account of the Bay of Pig's fiasco.

Intervention Strategies

The facilitator in praxis settings should be eclectic in the use of intervention strategies. The art of facilitation is knowing when to use which. John Heron offers six types of intervention strategies.

1. **Prescriptive:** interventions deliberately offer advice or counsel
2. **Informative:** interventions offer leads or ideas about how to proceed on a given matter, ie., where to find an appropriate resource to contribute to a project.
3. **Confronting:** interventions directly challenge members of the team on such issues as: their current process, evolving relationships within the team, restricted intellectual frameworks.
4. **Cathartic:** interventions address emotional undercurrents and seek to release tension, ie., prompting the expression of grief or anger.
5. **Catalytic:** interventions provide a structure or framework to encourage the development of an idea or to remove a blockage, ie., suggesting that a member stop, reflect, and write down her thoughts or asking someone to role-play an individual with whom a member is reporting to have difficulty.
6. **Supportive:** interventions display care and attention and offer empathy.

Critical Facilitation

Praxis has assumed a critical nature in some quarters not because it is directly associated with a change in the social order, but because its inquisitive orientation can highlight contradictions inherent in the power structure. Given this expanded function of praxis, the facilitator may assume more particularistic process role. Critical praxis requires a discourse in which members of the group are encouraged to challenge not only the statements they and others make, but also the assumptions they may be relying upon in producing the statements.

Advanced Facilitator Skills in Praxis

Facilitation has often been referred to as an art rather than a skill, because it often requires interventions that are based as much on "feel" as on pre-planned rational thought.

Nevertheless, there are skills that facilitators can practice to help surface learning within praxis settings. There need be no mystery surrounding the articulation of these skills by facilitators. They can explain them to others in the learning team so that they gradually assumed by other facilitating members of the team itself.

CONCLUSION

Facilitation has become a popular practice not only within groups, where it got its start, but as an art and skillset that promote a focus on process in human dynamics. However, it has lost one of its initial distinction as a service that seeks to develop both individuals and their social systems. The service orientation of facilitation becomes paramount especially when the focus of the entity is on Praxis, namely, on learning from

reflection on practice. The facilitator is not just a guide to increase the efficiency of the operation or to remove the obstacles to task accomplishment. The facilitator is committed to the learning of each member within the group, as well as of the group itself, even to a degree that the membership entertains perspectives not thought of before, or questions the underlying assumptions guiding their actions. In this way, praxis facilitation can contribute to addressing one of the nagging questions that continues to confound the field of management and organizational behaviour-how to engage reflection to truly bridge the gap between theory and practice.

References

1. Friere, P. (2003) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
2. Revans .R.W (1982) *The Origin and Growth of Action Learning*. Brickley, UK
3. Heydebrand .W *Organization and Praxis* .pp.306-320.
4. Heron. J (1967) *Six Category Intervention Analysis* (Human Potential Research Project, University of Surrey, UK).
5. Rosen. M (1987) *Critical Administrative Scholarship, Praxis, and the Academic Workplace*. *Journal of Management*,13,573-586
6. Sunitha.L.F; SRF Research Scholar, Department of Economics, University College, Trivandrum.

How to cite this article:

Sunitha L F.2018, Reconfiguring the Methodologies Used In Social Science Researches: Study on Praxis Intervention Strategy. *Int J Recent Sci Res*. 9(12), pp. 29800-29803. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2018.0912.2933>
