

Reflections on Research methods and Procedures

1

BY

COMRADE TRYWELL KALUSOPA

Introduction

2

- **Introduction**
- **Definition of Research Methods**
- **Ethical Issues in doing Research**
- **Research Paradigm**
- **The Question of Action Research**
- **The Research Process**
-

Introduction to Research Skills

3

- Social problems are not the sole province of any one discipline or even the social sciences in general.
- Trade unionists, industrialists, economists, novelists and journalists, as well as political and government officials, all deal with social problems.
- Trade unionists, however, have a unique perspectives on social problems.
- Fortunately, the sometimes seemingly intractable problems of relations among individuals and groups can, in fact, be systematically analysed.
- Nevertheless, despite important differences among disciplines, they have in common a particular way of collecting and analysing information about social problems.
- This common perspective is what is referred to as the research skills.

What is Research Methods

4

- Systematic research procedures and techniques which help the researcher/investigator to avoid self-deception
- Why avoid self-deception?
 - A researcher wants to accurately describe and explain the thing he/she observes.
 - Guard against being unwittingly inaccurate: self-deceiving may result to unreliable findings, thus wrong cause of action (decision making).

What is Research Methods

5

- How do we avoid self-deception?
- Through the understanding of systematic and reliable research "methodology"
 - (a) Understanding the problem of sampling
 - (b) Understanding data collection instrument
 - (c) Inference

Why undertake Research?

6

- To provide the solution to a problem of public policy
- To produce data needed for decision making and institutional management
- To update a continuing series of trend management
- To test hypothesis developed by social scientists

Research Ethics

7

- Most of the time the act of choosing a particular research technique involves an implicit judgment about the **ethics** of the proposed procedure.
- There is a difference between what is legal and what is ethical in doing research.
- Ethics is much more than the compliance with laws and regulations. Rather, a particular act may be legal but not ethical. For example, although it is perfectly legal to observe people without their consent when they are shopping, some would argue that it is unethical to do so.

Research Ethics

8

- **Ethics is concerned with the development of moral standards applicable in situations in which there can be actual or potential harm of some kind (economic, physical, or mental) to an individual or group of individuals.**

Ethical Issues

9

- Is the action or anticipated action arbitrary or capricious? Does it unfairly single out an individual or group?
- Does the action or anticipated action violate the moral or legal rights of any individual or group?
- Does the action or anticipated action conform to accepted moral standards?
- Are the alternative courses of action that are less likely to cause actual or potential harm?

Eight Key Problem Areas of Ethical Concern

10

- Preserving participants anonymity
- Exposing participants to mental stress
- Asking participants questions detrimental to their self-interest
- Use of special equipment and techniques
- Involving participants in research without their knowledge
- Use of deception
- Use of coercion
- Depriving participants of the right to self-determination

Paradigms in Research

11

- **Most studies apply both:**
 - **Quantitative (data in numbers)**
 - **Qualitative (data in words)**
 - **Mixed methods (data in both)**

Research Paradigm & Research Designs

12

Quantitative, Qualitative & Mixed methods:

- Descriptive (Survey, Observational)
- Correlational
- Experimental (cause and effects): issues of hypothesis testing, reliability, validity are critical)

The Question of Action Research

13

- **Philosophy of action research**
 - Based action science (that researcher must participate in action rather than be a detached and unbiased observer role)
 - Researcher should search for knowledge but must be actively involved in bringing about certain outcomes
 - Interpretative
 - Understanding human actions and social practices
- **Sources of action research**
- **Nature of action research is (plan – action – results- reflection - plan)**

The Research Process

14

- **Formulate Research Problem**
- **Determine Research Design**
- **Design Data Collection Method and Forms**
- **Design Sample and Collect Data**
- **Analyse and Interpret Data**
- **Prepare Report**

RESEARCH PROCEDURES: Instrumentation

15

- Interview
- Questionnaires
- Observations
- Document Analysis

Next.....

16

Guiding the
development of a
research proposals:
some issues