TOWARDS A METHODICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY RESEARCH PRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we propose a theory of practice on disability research production which we call as 'the methodical model of disability research production'. Our aim is to practically and meaningfully promote the emancipation and inclusion of disabled people through research. We divide our discussion into three main parts. First, we discuss the basis for our theoretical foundation by interrogating and integrating the disability research principles and models proposed by earlier scholars in disability studies such as Mike Oliver, Emma Stone and Mark Priestley with the thoughts of Jurgen Habermas through his Critical Social Theory and Communicative Action Theory and David Hosking's Critical Disability Theory. Then, drawing from the first author's observation and first-hand experience in local disability research, we discuss issues in conducting disability research by categorizing each issue into what we call as internal and external structure of research. Internal structure relates to elements in the data collection process such as ethics, research design, methods, and engaging sample. External structure refers to superstructural elements which reflect researchers' ontology and epistemology, as well as the logistics of conducting research. Finally, we present our methodical model of disability research production which stands on eight core principles: (i) Emancipatory-inclusionary intention; (ii) Immersion into the issue; (iii) Active and respectful engagement; (iv) Reciprocal and gainful relationship; (v) Accessible, flexible and empowering methodologies; (vi) Ethical, responsible and reflexive implementation; (vii) Impactful and responsive outcomes; and, (viii) Continuous communication. We conclude this paper by welcoming fellow scholars to test and critically discuss the proposed model.

Keywords: Disability research production, emancipation, epistemology, inclusion, ontology.

INTRODUCTION

Disability studies is a fast-growing field as part of social sciences discipline. We can see the growth through the continuous increase of new studies every year, by both disabled and non-disabled academicians and university students all around the globe in various topics such as built environment, education, employment, health care, livelihood, stigma and so on. Like any other scientific field, the advancement of disability studies is through research production. We must then critically investigate the ontological, epistemological, methodological and moral issues of disability research production. The reason being to rectify the failure of past research on disability as Mike Oliver points out: (a) Previous research fails to bring forth the experiences of disability based on disabled people's perspective; (b) Previous research also fails to give useful recommendations to policy making and change the situation of disabled people; and finally, (c) Previous research still preoccupied with medical and welfare themes, and fails to see disability as political issue (Oliver, 2002, p. 2).

Disability research demands a different approach since it deals with disabled people as research sample and other stakeholders as well as the relationships that exist between the two. In Western countries, there are scholars discussing issues concerning disability research processes. Unfortunately, we cannot say the same for the local sphere. We strongly feel that we should carry on with such discussion, contextualizing in local sociocultural settings on the disability research process. This in turn renewing and strengthening our praxis to achieve meaningful emancipation for the disabled community through epistemic ventures. In this paper, we propose a theory of practice on disability research production, which we call as 'methodical model of disability research production'.

We break up our discussion into three main parts. First, we interrogate and integrate the work of Jurgen Habermas, David Hosking, and other literature from earlier scholars in disability studies, to come up with a theoretical foundation. Next, we discuss a number of issues relating to the internal and external structure of disability research processes from the first author's observation and first-hand experience. Finally, linking up the two previous parts, we put forth our methodical model of disability research production, underlining each of its core principles in a practical way.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since the introduction of the social model of disability in the 1980s, early disability studies scholars start to talk about an emancipatory approach. One of them is Mike Oliver. This theme of emancipation is not an exclusive phenomenon in disability studies because feminist methodology also talked abundantly about this particular topic. In disabled people's lives context, the emancipatory approach is important to the disabled community since it recognizes their issues as a political matter which captured through their own words and then used to bring change to their livelihood. Compared to value-led research projects, emancipatory disability research does not only insert the value of human or community emancipation theoretically but also give huge importance in taking actions to liberate the researched group. In the context of disabled people and disability research, the emancipatory approach aims to produce, what we call as "disability emancipation", which means to produce actions or strategies

to remove the disabilities caused by societal and environmental barriers. Barnes and Mercer summarize emancipatory research as:

> "…should be enabling not disabling. It must be 'reflexive' and self-critical lest a new orthodoxy is established which turns 'doing disability research' into a technical routine. Disability research must not deteriorate into propaganda: it must be politically committed but rigorous." (Barnes & Mercer 1997, p. 7)

Oliver extends this paradigm by basing it on three fundamentals: reciprocity, gain, and empowerment (Oliver 1997, p. 17). Reciprocity refers to reciprocal recognition between researchers and the researched. Researchers should recognize their participants as "expert-knowers" and transfer their skills and knowledge to facilitate the emancipation process of disabled people (Barnes & Mercer 1997, p. 6). To achieve this level of reciprocity, good quality of relationships between researchers and the researched must be established and maintained, and this is a primary characteristic in qualitative research (Nind 2008, p. 6). Using a participatory approach or collaborative approach is most suitable to achieve good social relation between researchers and the research participants. In this nature of research, Stubbs (1999, pp. 265-266) shares five things to be considered and those are the involvement of all stakeholders in every level of research process, the members must be diverse, disabled people must have representative role, recognition and good management of power differences, and finally, having a shared and agreed goal.

For the second principle, disability research must produce an equal gain for all parties involved in the project. It is difficult to formulate a clear equation that can prove an equal gain for all parties. Yet, we argue that equal gain can be either in abstract-lagging form or concrete-immediate form or even both. For instance, the researcher can get the data needed to fulfill their publication requirement, whereas the researched group either disabled community or Disabled People's Organization or government agency can initiate a strategy or program to build their capacities or replicate good programs for the benefits of disabled community elsewhere.

This point then brings us to the third principle which is empowerment. One may argue that empowerment focuses on the capacity building or the mainstreaming the voices of the disabled. However, we want to argue here that empowerment can happen for both disabled community and their families as well as bring the enablement effects to other parties that may involve in the project such as private businesses, teachers, or government agencies, without neglecting or decreasing the attention on the empowerment process for the disabled community. In other words, disability research should try to promote the twin-track strategy, which is the enablement-empowerment ideology as best as possible, rather than merely "putting blame" or "pointing fingers".

However, the three basic principles put forth by Oliver (1997) skip the most important part of disability research, which is the ontological and epistemological standing. We must first understand the disability concept and its history, not only stuck at medical and welfare model or approach. The way we understand disability will have an influence on our approach in tackling the conflict and bringing a change within the disabled community. The same view also shared by Fernando Fontes and colleagues, which state that:

> "Far from being irrelevant, the way in which we view disability is essential to the way in which we define the problems and draw up solutions." (Fontes, Martins & Hespanha 2014, p. 851).

The way we understand disability also influence our approach to framing what constitutes a disability as a phenomenon and the way we convey information about it (Hedlund 2000, p. 766). If a researcher still views disabled people through medical and welfare framework, then the disabled people will always be seen as "just a research object" (Barnes & Mercer 1997, pp. 5-6), incapable to discuss and understand research ethics (Nind 2008, p. 6), incompetent, need to be taught, inferior (Baker-Shenk & Kyle 1990, pp. 67-68), and "a commodity" for researchers' personal gain (Barnes & Mercer 1997, pp. 5-6; Shakespeare 1996). Stone and Priestley (1996) develop another set of principles in conducting disability research. Those principles are the adoption of the social model of disabilities as ontological and epistemological foundation, rejection of detach-objective position to pushing for emancipatory agenda, readiness to bring change to the researched's self-empowerment or the removal of the barriers, sharing control over research process to make researchers more accountable to their research participants and the Disabled People's Organizations, promoting individual voices and experiences whilst working to collectivize the commonalities of experiences of all research participants and adoption of plural methodologies based on the needs of research participants.

With regards to the first principle put forth by Stone and Priestley (1996), which is the adoption of the social model of disability as ontological and epistemological standpoint for any disability research, many scholars warn of such action may result in treating the disabled sample and their experience only as analytical object (Morris 1992), and its tendency to dismiss opposite findings which then establish an intellectual hegemony (Danieli & Woodhams 2005, p. 288). In overcoming these limitations, Danieli and Woodhams (2005) suggest for disability research to approach their research by employing plural methodologies which do not abide by any theoretical standpoint and critically investigate the intersections of multiple dimensions in disabled people's lives. Though in a different word, Hughes (2007) also suggest the same aspiration by introducing the adoption of a critical social ontology of disability which critically investigates the position of disabled people in their community, the element of impairment and the experience produced from it as well as material relationships between disabled persons and their community.

To solve the ontological and epistemological backfire, we argue model of disability research production can benefit from the integration of two proposals by Oliver (1997) and Stone and Priestley (1996) with components from David Hosking's Critical Disability Theory. In his paper, Hosking (2008) outlines seven elements which are models of disability, multidimensionality, valuing diversity, rights, voices of disability, language and transformative politics. With regards to models of disability, Critical Disability Theory adopts the biopsychosocial model of disability, which is the synthesis of both social and medical models of

disability. In other words, disability encompasses one's biological condition (impairment and/or chronic illness), experience from living with such condition and socio-environmental barriers that exist in the surrounding. Situating this element in the context of disability research production, it is imperative that researchers must have equal recognition of socio-environmental inequalities in the disabled people's lives as well to acknowledge and realize different groups of disabled community for the better conduct of their research process. One must understand the type and degree of impairment that his or her sample possesses, to better adjust the data collection methods to suit the needs of every research participant.

This directly links to the elements of multidimensionality and valuing diversity. Disability is not a mere product of biological conditions and socio-environmental settings, and disabled community not only consists of those with visible impairment. Rather, disability is a continuum process (Shakespeare & Watson 2002) and intersections of multiple variables (Efendi, Fadzil & Khoo 2018; Kraus 2008; Morris 1992; Soder 2009). Furthermore, during the research process, researchers must respect the individual rights of their research participants for autonomy, and give attention to their voices. These two elements, rights and voices, fit perfectly with the three basic principles put forth by Oliver (1997).

With regards to language, we can see this element from two angles. First, researchers must understand and use appropriate terminologies when interacting with their sample and reporting the findings. Second, researchers must portray the situation of their sample by balancing between the researched's perspective and also the need for critical interrogation. To achieve this, one must immerse into disability issues and have appropriate ontological and epistemological standing prior to the data collection process. We very much stress this part because language is important, both during the research process and in its outcomes. Besides that, disability researchers must uphold the aspiration of transformative politics through their epistemic endeavors.

We also propose the incorporation of Jurgen Habermas's Critical Social Theory and Communicative Action Theory in this new theoretical framework. Jurgen Habermas argues that the journey towards knowledge is initiated by the human "interests" which can be divided into three types of interests: technical (interest to seek control of natural objects and events), practical (interest to seek community and mutuality) and emancipatory (interest to seek liberation) (Scott 2001, p. 2). These three interests then produce three forms of knowledge which are analytical-empirical, historical-hermeneutic and critical-dialectical (Scott 2001, pp. 3-4). Logically, disability researchers must have all three of mentioned interests.

We assert that Jurgen Habermas's Communicative Action Theory extends and complements the principles of gain and reciprocity by Oliver (1997). Communicative action aims to find consensus amongst the community and can only happen when the community uphold mutual reciprocal relationships, solidarity and collectively understood norms (Scott 2001, p. 6). The consensus then will be formed through communication rationality within the community as its vital vehicle to achieve communicative action (Sudersan 1998, p. 263). Communication rationality can be achieved when the community has space and freedom to act and interact which eventually lead to rational consensus among themselves (Mitrovic 1999, pp. 220-221). From this theory, we can extract five useful values which are communication, solidarity, rationality, mutual reciprocity, and freedom.

Though communication and rationality are vital to achieve and enable solidarity, mutual reciprocity, and freedom during the research process, we caution for critical reflection on the meaning of these two keywords. We must not get carried away or narrowly focus on the typical mode of communication and the typical conception of rationality. If such preoccupation happens, we tend to treat opinions or experiences of persons with learning disabilities, mental health problems and speech impairment as unworthy, useless and unreliable, which in turn dismissing altogether their voices and establish biases toward certain subgroups of disabled people.

ISSUES IN CONDUCTING DISABILITY RESEARCH

Though the end goal of any disability research is to achieve the disabled people's emancipation, there are several considerations which academicians, and even for disabled activists and the community themselves, must recognize and carefully tackle to minimize any form of risks such as further segregation, tendency to dismiss some voices and ungrounded suggestions. These considerations relate to the internal and external structure of research.

The Internal structure of research refers to components directly influence or affects data collection process such as ethics, research design, methods, sample engagement, and reporting. On the other hand, the external structure of research refers to superstructural components which shape researchers' ontology, epistemology and psycho-emotion, and logistics in conducting a research project. These superstructural components include aspects such as researchers' position, knowledge source, researcher-researched relationships, research goal, and funding.

The internal structure of research

Under the internal structure of research, we discuss five particular points; ethics, research design, methods, sample engagement, and reporting. Based on the principles set forth by Oliver (1997), it seems that the best research design to translate emancipatory approach in disability research is through employing action research design. This is because action research does not only concern with collecting data but also acting on solving the problem or conflict faced by the researched community. In other words, it relies on active participation among the researched community. Active participation is influenced by the empowerment possessed by the research participants. However, not every disabled individual has a chance or space to empower themselves.

So, most of the time, participation among disabled individuals may start with passive participation then gradually change to active participation. We must also be careful of not actually imposing participation among the research participants (Campbell & Trotter 2007). On the other hand, although action research has a very huge potential in producing "real effect" to the researched community, some researchers may not have the capacity to conduct it effectively, especially students due to some constraints

(e.g. time, monetary etc.). Sometimes the intended action research becomes partial-action research since the participatory dimension is limited in a certain period or stage of the research.

However, it is inaccurate to say that disability research is limited only to action research methodology. In fact, disability research has been done using many different methodologies such as ethnographic research as argued by Davis (2000), narrative methodology (see for example Smith & Sparkes 2008; Topp 2004), phenomenological research (see for example Papadimitriou 2008), and so forth. We believe any methodology either qualitative, quantitative or mix-method in nature can be used to research disability issues. Sometimes, researching disability issues can result in developing or finding a new and creative way to collect data from the researched group.

Our argument, however, positioning ourselves on the same line as Hughes (2007) as well as Danieli and Woodhams (2005), disability research can expand its methodological philosophy with the use of plural methodologies. Sometimes, one methodological approach is not sufficient to capture a holistic or larger perspective of the issue researched. One methodological approach complements another methodological approach in translating greater emancipatory effects from the research. For instance, a research may use narrative methodology to gather experiences of disabled people through their life stories, then brought to the authority using critical communicative methodology by organizing a dialogue between the disabled community and the related agencies and at the same time adopting action research methodology to come up and implement activities to solve the problems.

We are not saying that every disability research project should adopt plural methodologies. It still depends on the research objectives, research questions, capacity and resources of the researcher. With different methodology used, the researcher must be able to manage and connect different form of data collected. Nevertheless, plural methodologies can be very beneficial to disability research, especially in producing emancipation and inclusion for the disabled community.

At the center of any social research is research ethics. Ethical consideration is driven by the researcher's moral principles. Ethics does not only focus on doing good things. It also focuses on doing it in the right way. Ethics are implicitly incorporated in each step of the research process; getting a sample, doing appointments, collecting data and producing a result. Researchers do not only need to consider ethical issues such as privacy, anonymity and voluntary participation, but researchers should also give a serious attention to the ethics of listening to the respondents' feedback regarding research topic (Barton 2005; see also Goggin 2009), ethics of facilitation in group discussion (especially when the group consists of various type of impairment) and ethics of writing result that reflect the reality of the respondents. Any researcher must not overlook these implicit yet important matter in order to truly bring emancipation to the beneficiaries.

Prior to doing the sampling process, a researcher must identify or make an inventory on his or her level of sample accessibility. Besides considering problem statement, research objectives, and other logistics, we realize from our previous work (Nasir & Hussain 2016) that sample accessibility plays a very key role to successfully run a research project. Sample accessibility means one's ability or having a network of direct contact to disabled individuals which enables him or her to meet, disseminating survey, refer to an expert or even requesting favors. However, we must be critical of the biases that may follow, especially when using convenient or purposive sampling.

One useful practice in engaging disabled sample for research purposes is through the "gateway granter" (Nind 2008). The "gateway granter" refers to those who can introduce, recommend and facilitate the meeting between the researcher and his or her targeted research participants. These individuals can be leaders of Disabled People's Organizations or someone who is working or volunteering at the organizations, disabled activists, established academicians or researchers in the field or even disabled university students. First, the researcher must begin by creating a network and forging a relationship with the potential researched group. We discuss further this point on building a relationship between the researchers and the researched in the later part of this paper.

Another particularity that we should be concerned with is the techniques or method used in doing disability research. Qualitative method seems to be the first choice to collect information from disabled people about their challenges, struggles, and achievements (Nind 2008; Shakespeare 1996). Even so, it does not mean doing disability research limits the use of a quantitative method. But, two key issues must be addressed here either for qualitative, quantitative or even for mix methods research; the accessibility of the particular method used and the emancipation ability of that particular method.

With regards to result reporting, Shakespeare (1996) warns us to be meticulous on our own writing. Even though we have given the space to our researched community the power to voice out, at the end of the day, the researcher will be the last person to write their voices. The researcher must position him- or herself as a reporter who sought to bring the researched voices under the spotlight. This again is related to ethics. Besides writing a research report, we argue that it is important for the researcher to disseminate research findings to related parties in an appropriate manner. Knowledge dissemination is a part of the emancipation process and we firmly believe it should be a common practice. However, the challenge may be in delivering the result in accessible language and format according to the level of understanding of a diverse group of readers.

The external structure of research

The conflict of preference between insider or outsider researcher will always present in a social science field, especially when it comes to studies of a specific group of individuals such as women, indigenous people, and disabled people. The narrow focus on this issue may be harmful to both the discipline and the disabled people as a whole. This can lead to segregation among the community which is the exact opposite of the goal of emancipation and inclusion idealized through disability research. The crucial point here is not either the researcher is insider or outsider, instead, the question should be whether the researcher has a good intention and interest of emancipation of his or her research participants, understand and practice ethics, and equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to do disability research.

Both insider and outsider researchers must recognize their biases when embarking into a disability research project. For outsider researcher, they must acknowledge and play their roles (Walmsley 2004; Stone & Priestley 1996). The insider researcher too must acknowledge and take up their responsibilities when conducting disability research. Another way to overcome this dilemma is through collaboration between the insider and outsider researcher in a particular project (see Tregaskis & Goodley 2005).

With the popularity of the social model of disability, more disability research today give high value to the personal experience of the disabled sample. The experience of disability should be presented as told by those who lived the experience themselves. Thus, the researchers should listen to the disabled people's lived experience and interpret them according to their perspective. However, we must also note that the personal experience of disabled people is not the only source of data. In fact, disability research also needs to listen and understand the perspective of other stakeholders involved in the issue. More often than not, the issue faced by disabled group intersects with other group or individuals such as family members, employers, educators, service providers, and government officers.

Disability exists not only in environmental and physical form but also encompasses social, cultural, systemic and relational barriers. In addition, we should realize that most stakeholder involved for example civil servants or business owners simply do not have the capacity to serve the needs of disabled people. It is common to hear many civil servants or service providers admit that they may face with bureaucracy, lack of technical expertise, financial constraint and so on. Finding out these obstacles can help researchers in getting a broader and better picture of the issue. Therefore, other stakeholders' situation and position are equally important as the challenges and the needs of the disabled community.

We must not ignore the domain of 'etic' too in a disability research production. It is unfair to demonize the etic's perspective on the research process and research data. We are very much aware of the many risks associated with etic's influence on research such as biased analysis and interpretation. However, the etic also responsible for arranging the knowledge into a coherent form, doing reflexivity and linking data which may not be acknowledged before. The role and responsibility of the etic become more visible and important when one is conducting autoethnographic research. Furthermore, disabled researchers possess ontological resources since they themselves are living with impairment/chronic illness and such resources must be recognized (Tregaskis & Goodley 2005, p. 367). If we suggest such resources is unworthy and simply reject it, it seems paradoxical and counter-productive for disability research. Besides that, Blakely (2007) suggests that researching one's own emotion during the research process can also offer valuable resources.

Next, there is the issue of the research goal. Every research is driven by the interest of that particular researcher. This interest, or we like to call it as "intention", is hugely grounded based on researcher's ontological, epistemological and moral values in that topic (Williams & May 1996, p. 136). For disability research, researchers should take one step further compared to conducting value-led research because disability research not only concerns with the employment of emancipatory paradigm but also the action which will be taken to emancipate the research beneficiaries. Emancipation cannot be realized if the researcher has hidden motives or half-hearted enthusiasm for the research project. It is not about the label "emancipatory disability research" that we should chase after, but the intention to conduct such project, how we do it and what change we can produce from it.

The focus of disability research is a disability and the subject usually will be the disabled people. However, this very first feature gives rise to several questions: How the researchers define and operationalize disability? What model or theory they base their analysis on? Even though the researchers or students employ social model or right-based model of disability as their analytical tool, there still a possibility the study focuses so much on disability which then narrows their scope that leads to more exclusionary conclusions rather emphasizes the inclusion of the researched group (Morris 1992).

Some scholars may see the intention to emancipate the research participants through a research project can harm the advancement of human knowledge and reject the scientific-critical characteristic of science. At the end of the same spectrum, conducting abundant of research without translating it into reality can harm the social, political, psychological and emotional gain of the research participants from such projects as well as isolate the scientific world from the lives of ordinary individuals who need emancipation from such intellectual discourse. In truth, disability researchers must reject the idea of "neutrality" and be committed to eliminating the system that isolates and exclude disabled people (Fontes, Martins & Hespanha 2014, p. 853). It is not about whether to choose or prioritize one than the other. Rather, both knowledge and emancipation should be the integral part of research interest, process, and outcomes.

Speaking about emancipatory outcomes, researchers still possess their own limitations. Researchers can transfer their skills and knowledge to the disabled community and publicize their research findings to related stakeholders. But, when it comes to systemic or policy change, it requires political will from the politicians and policymakers. Though we firmly believe researchers have the power to bring positive change to disabled people's lives through intellectual discourse, meaningful emancipation still heavily relies on political will, appropriate funding provision and civic consciousness.

With regards to researcher-researched relationships, this matter is very much interrelated to the aspects of the internal structure discussed above. Researcher-researched relationship reflects the quality as well the quantity of the data collected. Researchers or students not only must be curious about the research topic but also be actively partisan in the topic chosen and in the researched community. In other words, researchers must practice attach-objective position in their research process (Barnes 1997). Disability research methodology also urges the repositioning of the relationships between the two parties. However, not every disabled person has the capacity or even the commitment to actively involved in a research project. Most of the time, such engagement or relationship may start as a conventional researcher-researched relationship.

In another scenario, when there are three parties involve and the researcher plays the role as mediator or negotiator (for instance a research project that involves government officers and leaders from Disabled People's Organizations) the challenge will be in realigning everyone's strata since both the emic (the disabled community) and the other-emic (the related entities/persons) may have different goals, intention, and authoritative power. In short, managing power of difference amongst research team is vital in such condition.

Finally, most of the disability research can be seen as "trial and error" since it is obvious that we will never find an absolute solution only through one short project. Emancipation process takes time and it can be a long and sometimes uncertain endeavor. Even though the project is finished, it still needs some form of monitoring. Such endeavor requires a huge amount of funding and not many funding lasts for a long period of time. Both time and money are limited resources. One way to overcome this challenge is by practicing multi-sector initiatives to share resources and expertise. Again, establishing collaboration, delegating power and sharing resources are not easy tasks.

Zarb (1992, p. 127) argues that the disabled people do not possess any control over the material relations of disability research production, mainly the funding. Such funding comes from the government, higher learning institutions, corporate bodies, and other funding bodies. On this point, several questions emerge: do they acknowledge the importance of disability research as part of a national or societal agenda? Are they aware and able to change their paradigm towards the technicality and funding process for disability research? Taking from the first author's experience, it is not easy to secure funding because you need to have some form of credential (both academically and affiliation), have to find or attach to senior researchers or professors as your back up and go through the unnecessarily bureaucratic maze.

Learning from Ward's (1997) experience, a funding body can promote emancipatory disability research by taking some initial steps such as adopting a partnership approach with disabled and non-disabled researchers, networking with Disabled People's Organizations and directly involve disabled experts in the advisory/reviewer committee. In short, an ecosystem to positively nurture meaningful material and social relations of disability research production must be established.

PROPOSING 'METHODICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY RESEARCH PRODUCTION'

Stemming from previous work and our own observations in doing disability-related research, we propose a new theoretical and practical model of disability research production which critically reflexive of researchers' latent and manifest responsibilities as well as our relationships with the researched group and their community. Our proposed model encompasses the following principles:

  i. Emancipatory-inclusionary intention: Researchers must have a clear, firm and strong intention to seek emancipation and inclusion of disabled community through their scientific endeavor.

  ii. Immersion into the issue: Before going to the field, researchers must critically explore, understand and equip themselves with the broad ontological, epistemological, methodological and moral standing on disability, questioning their position in the research and their relationships to the research participants. Researchers must grasp the situation of the disabled community, including related policies and legislation, and understand basic matters such as definition, type, and needs of different persons with impairment/chronic illness. This intellectual-personal interrogation must continue even during the data collection process and reporting research findings.

  iii. Active and respectful engagement: Researchers must actively and respectfully engage with their research participants, take interests with their life experience and not just treating them as research subjects. Before collecting data, researchers must first work on establishing good relationships with the research participants, either through gateway granter or directly. Researchers may start the engagement by visits, volunteering in a Disabled People's Organization, casual interaction and so forth.

  iv. Reciprocal and gainful relationships: During the research process and after the project is finished, researchers must work to produce and maintain reciprocal and gainful experience for all parties. Researchers must consciously acknowledge their gain from the study and put an effort to maximize the benefits for their research participants too. The benefits can be in a material form (such as giving out a token of appreciation), or in abstract form (such as working together to conduct an empowerment program or teaching them how to do business), or even both.

  v. Accessible, flexible and empowering methodologies: Regardless of methodology or combination of methodologies the researchers choose, it is imperative for the researchers to make sure the way they use the methods are accessible to their research participants. Researchers must provide space for their research participants to voice out and share their opinions, experience, and concerns. Researchers must prepare to change the medium or mode of communication or even adopt different data collection methods during the research process.

vi.   Ethical, responsible and reflexive implementation: Throughout the research process, researchers must practice ethics and always aware of their own biases. Strong ethics and continuous reflection are keys here.

vii.   Impactful and responsive outcome: At the end of the project, researchers must translate their emancipatory-inclusionary intention by taking some form of actions to bring impact from their research according to their capabilities.

viii.   Continuous communication: Researchers must be accountable to have continuous communication with their research participants even when the project is finished. Continuous communication includes informing the progress of research process and sharing research findings or research report with the researched group. Researchers must also share the research findings with the related Disabled People's Organization and relevant authorities. The research report must be in an accessible format. For that, researchers can work with Disabled People's Organization in producing the accessible report. They must inform their research participants of actions which will be taken upon from the research and the progress of such actions.

CONCLUSION

It is not our aim to impose a new orthodoxy nor intellectual hegemony to others on doing disability research. Instead, the eight core principles are guiding principles for academicians and students in navigating the research process when involving disabled sample and disability issues. Of course, this model must be put on a test and fellow scholars are welcomed to interrogate it thoroughly. We firmly believe continuous reflection and renewal of model is necessary as we social scientists sought to find the truth. In fact, as scholars who research marginalized group such as the disabled, we want to find the truth through their and others' experiences, and coming out with something meaningful from it, which is the researched group's emancipation.

Through this paper, we hope to encourage local scholars and students to reflect on their research projects on disability issues and document those reflections. This is not to expose one's insecurity or weaknesses. Rather, reflexivity must be seen as a technical routine of any scientific endeavor for one to learn and seek the truth which in turn produce better conduct for future work. As more and more of us feel pumped up and fascinated in doing disability research, we owe to ourselves to actively and critically reflect on our position as a researcher in a disability research project, the research process, our relationships with the disabled sample and the effects of our research on the disabled sample lives.

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