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Title : *Understanding and Applying Research Paradigms in Educational Contexts*
Authors : Charles Kivunja & Ahmed Bawa Kuyini (2017)
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This article provides an extensive explanation of the meaning and application of research paradigms in the field of educational research. The authors highlight that a paradigm functions as a philosophical and theoretical lens through which a researcher perceives and interprets reality. Understanding paradigms is essential because it influences every stage of research from formulating the problem and selecting methods to interpreting the findings and drawing conclusions.

1. Definition and Components of a Research Paradigm

A research paradigm represents a worldview or framework of beliefs that guide how knowledge is generated. It consists of four philosophical pillars:

- Ontology – the researcher’s view of reality (Is there one objective truth or multiple realities?);
- Epistemology – how knowledge about that reality can be known;
- Methodology – the strategies or processes used to gain knowledge;
- Axiology – the role of values and ethics within the research process.

These four dimensions interact to shape the researcher’s assumptions and determine the type of methods that are appropriate for a given study.

2. Major Research Paradigms in Education

The article discusses four dominant paradigms:

- Positivist Paradigm: Rooted in objectivism and empirical observation. It uses quantitative methods to test hypotheses, measure variables, and generalize results. Reality is considered objective and measurable.

- Interpretivist (Constructivist) Paradigm: Emphasizes understanding human experiences and social meanings through qualitative approaches such as interviews, observations, and case studies.
- Critical/Transformative Paradigm: Focuses on social justice, equity, and empowerment. It critiques power structures and seeks to transform society through participatory and emancipatory research.
- Pragmatic Paradigm: Views research as problem-centered and flexible, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods) depending on the research objectives.

3. Methodological Implications

Each paradigm leads to different methodological choices. For instance, positivist researchers often apply experiments and statistical analysis, while interpretivists prefer thematic analysis and narrative interpretation. Researchers must clearly state their paradigmatic stance to ensure philosophical coherence and methodological validity.

4. Conclusion

Kivunja and Kuyini conclude that awareness of paradigms helps researchers align their philosophical worldview with methodological design. The paper serves as a practical guide for graduate students and novice researchers, encouraging them to make explicit their paradigm choice, justify it, and apply it consistently throughout their research.

VERSI BAHASA INDONESIA

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Artikel ini memberikan penjelasan mendalam mengenai makna dan penerapan paradigma penelitian dalam konteks pendidikan. Penulis menegaskan bahwa paradigma merupakan kerangka berpikir filosofis dan teoretis yang menentukan bagaimana seorang peneliti memandang, memahami, dan mempelajari realitas. Pemahaman terhadap paradigma sangat penting karena memengaruhi seluruh tahapan penelitian mulai dari penentuan masalah, pemilihan metode, hingga penarikan kesimpulan.

1. Pengertian dan Unsur Paradigma Penelitian

Paradigma penelitian adalah seperangkat keyakinan dan nilai yang membentuk cara pandang peneliti terhadap dunia. Terdapat empat komponen utama:

- Ontologi – pandangan tentang hakikat realitas;
 - Epistemologi – cara memperoleh pengetahuan tentang realitas tersebut;
 - Metodologi – langkah dan strategi untuk menemukan pengetahuan;
 - Aksiologi – nilai-nilai moral dan etika yang menyertai proses penelitian.
- Keempat aspek ini saling berhubungan dan membentuk dasar filosofis yang menentukan pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan.

2. Paradigma Utama dalam Penelitian Pendidikan

Penulis menjelaskan empat paradigma utama:

- Paradigma Positivistik: Mengutamakan objektivitas, pengukuran, dan metode kuantitatif untuk menguji hipotesis dan menemukan hubungan antarvariabel.
- Paradigma Interpretivistik (Konstruktivistik): Berupaya memahami makna pengalaman manusia secara mendalam menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif seperti wawancara atau observasi.
- Paradigma Kritis/Transformasional: Bertujuan mengubah kondisi sosial dan menentang ketidakadilan melalui penelitian yang berpihak pada kelompok tertindas.
- Paradigma Pragmatis: Menggabungkan pendekatan kualitatif dan kuantitatif secara fleksibel sesuai kebutuhan dan tujuan penelitian.

3. Implikasi Metodologis

Setiap paradigma memiliki implikasi terhadap cara perumusan pertanyaan penelitian, teknik pengumpulan data, analisis, dan interpretasi hasil. Peneliti perlu secara jelas menyatakan paradigma yang dianut agar penelitian memiliki konsistensi filosofis dan validitas metodologis.

4. Kesimpulan

Kivunja dan Kuyini menegaskan bahwa pemahaman dan penerapan paradigma penelitian yang tepat membantu peneliti menghubungkan pandangan filosofis dengan metode ilmiah secara konsisten. Artikel ini menjadi panduan penting bagi mahasiswa dan peneliti pemula agar mampu memilih, menjelaskan, dan menerapkan paradigma penelitian secara logis dan terarah.