

Abstract

The study titled “Self-Reflection as a Research Technique in Focus-Group Interview Process: A Case Study of the Project for the Promotion of Social Development under Sufficiency Economy Philosophy at Ban Ka Song, Muang Sub-District, Phrae Province” examines focus-group interview as data collection technique along with the technique of self–reflection in monitoring the implementation of the project for the promotion of social development under sufficiency economy philosophy. Mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative research was used at the target area of Ban Ka Song, Muang Sub-District, Phrae Province. The survey questionnaires were designed and used with the sampling population of 175 who are project participants to find out about knowledge, understanding and application dimensions of sufficiency economy philosophy. The results of the survey questionnaires were analyzed in order to design guided questions for subsequent focus-group interviews. Purposive sampling was conducted from 175 participants based on their willingness to participate in the focus group interviews. Eight focus groups were formed along gender, age and group size. The researcher served as a group facilitator.

1. The results of quantitative method used to assess the knowledge and understanding as well as the application of sufficiency economy philosophy in the livelihood of project participants are as follow:

1.1 Under learning process dimension, it was found tat most samples (97%) have heard about sufficiency economy concept while the rest (3.0%) have never heard about the Concept People’s sources of information on sufficiency economy included Department of Labour Protection and Welfare Security (48.9%), local meetings (22.6%), and farm agricultural instructions authorities (10.2%). For training on sufficiency economy, most samples (86.4%) attended training on sufficiency economy while 13.6% have never attended such training; 77.1% have participated in study visit while 22.9% have never participated in such visit.

In terms of understanding sufficiency economy concept, the knowledge of and understanding about food processing and preservation for consumption and sales of products such as dried banana has the highest, salted egg,

dry-pickled vegetable (\bar{X} =90.9). Second, new theory of agriculture and the reduction of household expense (\bar{X} =88.6). Third, the new theory of agriculture as agricultural production methods which consist of digging pond, home gardening, growing perennial plants in the same area; forth was related to the decrease of expenditure and sales of luxurious goods such as alcohol, cigarettes, illegal lottery (\bar{X} =82.3). and fifth was the new theory of agriculture as related to land use practice by dividing lands into areas for agricultural production, livestock raising, water catchment and residential purpose (\bar{X} =79.4).

With regard to the implementation of sufficiency economy philosophy in their livelihood, it was found that most respondents apply the concept to their livings. Having participated in the social development project, the following activities related to the philosophy of sufficiency economy were found: First, home gardening for household consumption (\bar{X} =64.6); second, the use of local materials and resources for their production (\bar{X} =64.0); third discussion on their livelihood based on sufficiency economy philosophy; fourth, membership in local savings group (\bar{X} =62.3); and fifth, the application of reason and intellect in their livelihood. (\bar{X} =58.3).

1.2 The results of focus group discussion are divided into themes as follow: The learning process which occurred as participants took part in the project on the promotion of social development under sufficiency economy. The participants emphasized the fact that they were able to apply the knowledge obtained from project participation in their livings. Focus group discussion provided greater details about recycling practice, reducing the use of chemical substance in their farming, communication through discussion among household and community members on the subject of sufficiency economy livelihood. The use of reason and intellect to guide drinking behavior, leading to the reduction of alcohol consumption was also mentioned. In short, results suggest that social development project played a vital role in enhancing the quality of life of the project participants.

2. The analyses of focus group discussion processes along with self-reflection as a technique used in focus-group discussion to monitor project performance were divided into two phases. 2.1 In the first phase, the researcher used

rapport building technique before focus-group interview by asking open-ended questions related to social environments, along with the use of non-verbal communication such as nodding, verbal acceptance, helped reduce tension and enhance relaxation of the participants; 2.2 Consequently in the next phase, the researcher was prepared and able to use focus-group interview techniques, applied from active listening techniques, namely paraphrasing, clarifying, giving short summary followed by questions, and summarizing. Additional verbal and non-verbal communication techniques were used to stimulate discussion among group members. The use of self-reflection in data collection with the participants consisted of two types: first was reflection-on-action. This technique was used to help members in their thinking back at what they did in the past, while reflection-in-action was used to help them reflect immediately on the process of the interviews. Both techniques were important in the researcher's facilitation process. 2.3 It was found that self-reflection was proved to be the important technique for self-realization to be sensitive the researcher in using power to direct the answers. Such technique helped the researcher to respect the human dignity of the participants. For the participants, it helped then to be answers of their own thought and feelings and to create their own willing to share their inner thought 2.4 Lastly the results based on the analysis of focus-group interview and self-reflection process show that personal factors such as gender, age, group size, time of the day and location when/where the interviews took place contributed to the kind of data obtained.

3. The researcher suggests that future research should focus on more diverse target groups such as Futher studies should also examine the application of self-reflection technique together with different research methods.