

Abstract

This research study explored the effectiveness of using Forum Theatre together with Appreciative Inquiry, as participatory methods to address the effects of xenophobia amongst Zimbabwean immigrant women living in Johannesburg, South Africa. The study was about merging Appreciative Inquiry and Forum Theatre to enhance women's agency to transform their individual lives and the communities they come from through the use of an integrated methodology, Practice as Research (PaR). The research brought into focus an emergent research praxis in the domains of practice-oriented research and challenged the binary habits of thought/theory and practice inherent in traditional research. The methodology was positioned as an instrument to assess the meaningful participation of the women in theatre. Augusto Boal's, David Cooperrider's and Freire's theoretical and conceptual frameworks guided and informed the study's epistemological and philosophical vision around the issue of xenophobia. The results of this study were interpreted and analysed through a thematic analysis approach. It was discovered that the methodological design including merging of the two methods (FT and AI) facilitated and influenced perspectives around the transformative nature of FT and AI. The study revealed that the women's bodies can be raised to critical levels of consciousness: Rehearsal rooms are symbolic conceptions for a rehearsal for a revolution: The women can move from margins of socio-economic rejection to recognition in the Johannesburg society amid xenophobia: The Joker's role and function is critical to the interventional and transformational facets of FT and AI. The study also highlighted the counter arguments to merging the two methods as practicable but idealistic