Reflective Paper 1

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**Introduction**

Criminal justice is the new philosophy in the field of criminology. It is the science of ideas that explains the importance of justice in the process of apprehending convicts and criminals. Criminal justice is the primary duty of law enforcement agencies where they have to keep an ethical balance between crime and justice. This application of justice is not as simple as it seems. This is the complex phenomenon and have several considerations as well. Several theories about evaluation paradigm exist in the evaluation process. Every paradigm has its own uniqueness and essential characteristics. Some of the chief models in process of evaluation are post positivism, pragmatism, constructivism, and the transformation that are widely applied in the field of criminal justice. Nevertheless, the application of such paradigms varies as per the social phenomenon.

**Discussion**

Evaluation is the undeniable feature in any program. It is the process that checks the validity of the program and its deliverables. It would not be wrong that evaluation is the essence of every program, and so is the case with criminal justice. There are always some methodologies and set of rules that are followed by the evaluators and administrators in the field. Usually the important variables in the evaluation models are: merit, worth, frequency and values. Merit symbolizes the prime quality of the program. Worth is the reflection of the outcome, and values are the core experiences that are too important in the process. However, to get a better view of the program, it is important to look into its peculiar strengths and weaknesses. In the field of criminal justice, there are several reports that guide the investigation into criminal scenes and the criminal activities such as Mary land report and the Campbell Collaboration ( Practical Program Evaluation for Criminal Justice,” n.d.). Criminal justice program evaluation requires the non-judgmental approach and the use of decision-making.

To begin with, the postpositivist and the method school of branch is the model that focus on the means and the methods. The term positivism and the post positivism illuminates the importance of scientific methods in the process of evaluation ( Program Evaluation Theory and Practice,” n.d.). Investigators of this branch takes into account the inquiry and the social research methods to investigate crimes in the society. However, it happens that evaluators hoodwink the core ethical principles such as justice, respect and the beneficence in evalution process. However, this paradigm has widespread popularity for its well-balanced scientific and quantitative methods for crime investigation.

Conversely, the pragmatic paradigm and the use branch is about the practical importance of common sense and the practical thinking. This is the school which develops an idea and put it into practice to check its applicability in the social setup. Similarly, when this followed in the criminal scenarios, the investigators stress more on practical nature of thing unlike the postpositivist investigators. It is also observed that such investigators often simplify the complex criminal situations which become least effective in dealing with crimes.

On the other hand, the constructivism and the values branch paradigm give more importance to the values in any research. The constructivists point out the values and belief of the evaluators which become a part in the process of evaluation. Their main idea is the social construction of realities that are widespread in this modern world and they have strong influence on the evaluators working in the field of crimes. This paradigm is more qualitative in its approach rather than quantitative. Though, constructivism is more about the participation of the people but often it gives too much importance to those irrelevant actors in the society and to the extension of epistemological base for crimes.

Furthermore, the transformative paradigm and the social justice branch reflect the need of a just and balanced society. Here, the criminal investigators are more focused on human rights and their violations . The researchers take the issue of power in the society, and strive to eliminate social inequalities in the social structures that engender criminal acts in the society. Administrators target the concept of historical realism narratives of power and truth to apply criminal justice in the society. They stress that effective communication with criminals can really reform them.

All these paradigms are inherently distinct and unique in their approach. Positivists give more precedence to quantity and the scientific means, while pragmatist are more value-oriented in their ends. Knowledge is more important for construcivists in any evaluation process, and for transformers it the social justice that is pivotal for the social order. Nevertheless, in my view, the effective and well-suited paradigm in the application of criminal justice is the transformative and the social justice branch. It is the school of thought which is most relevant in the complex social structures that exist today. Criminals are human beings despite the social wrong they have committed. This transformation paradigm focusses on those who have been marginalized in the society and gives respect to their cultural normative patterns. The transformation paradigm of evaluation is more applicable in the societies where complex power structures are radicalizing the person. It is also more sensitive to the historical factors such as oppression that occur due to the elite class in the society. Henceforth, among all evaluation paradigms, the choice of transformation and the social justice works best with the criminal justice in the society.

**Conclusion**

To summarize, it may be fairly suggested from the above discussion that program evaluation is much important in the field of criminal justice. Several models, theories and paradigms exist to effectively manage the herculean evaluation process. Nevertheless, the transformation and the social justice paradigm is more effective in the process of understanding criminals and their criminal acts.

**References**

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